July 20, 1992

THE NEW YORKER

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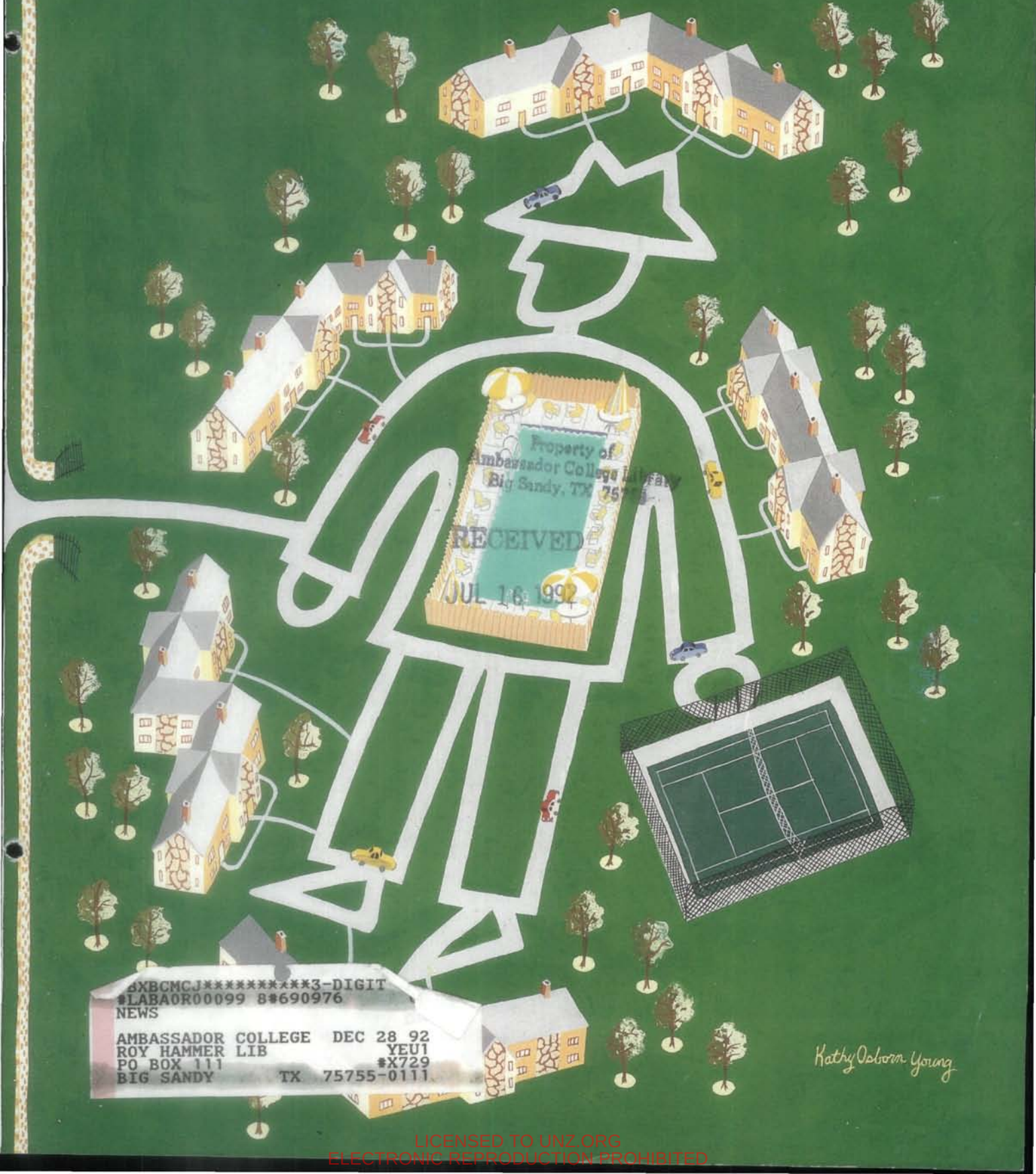

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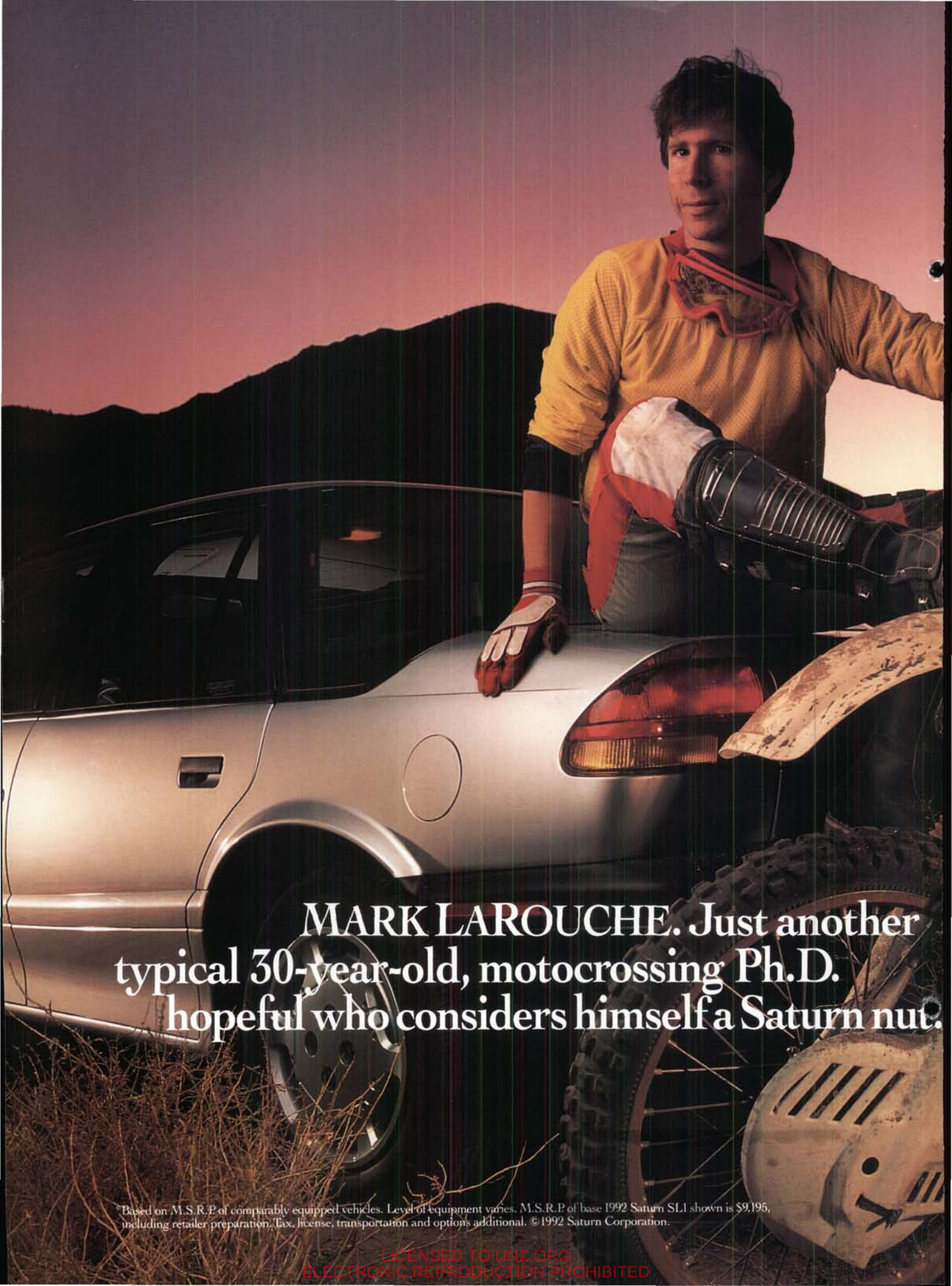

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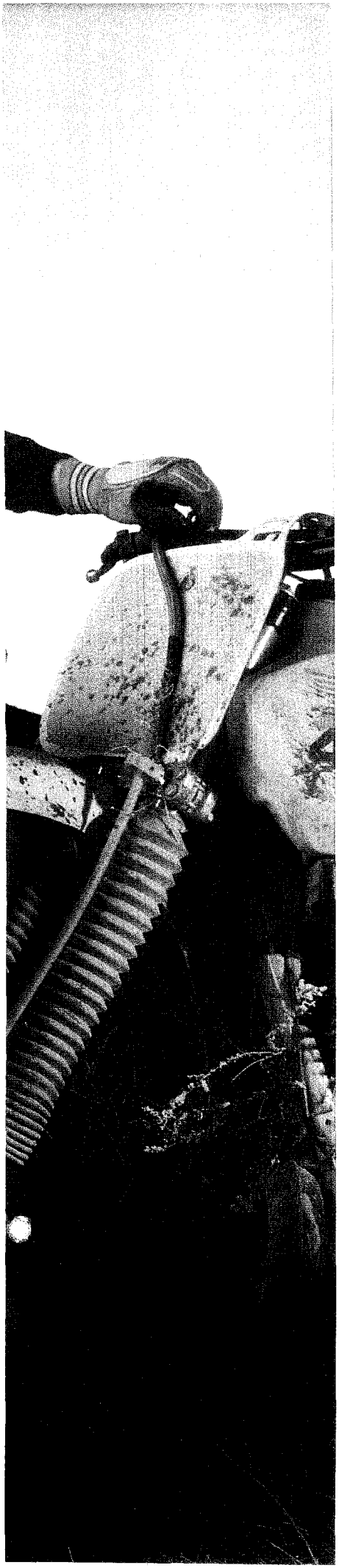

That's him, our man in the mud, Mark LaRouche. Husband to Maureen. Father to Wade. Slave to fun.

The future doctor here (he's closing in on his Ph.D. in Computer Science) not only has his intellectual pursuits, he has a real thing for knobby tires and flying dirt clods.

Certainly not the sort of guy too likely to settle for some meek car with an anemic little powerplant. Which is why, after nixing the idea of buying a Honda Accord when he discovered the little numbers on the sticker weren't so little, Mark jumped all over the SL1.

In his words, "the SL1 not only swivels heads in the performance department, it was equivalent to an Accord in every other area we felt was important to us, for a lot less.*" Needless to say, it's not like Mark needed a doctorate to sort that one out.

SATURN

As a result, the LaRouches have a car they like, with a pocketful of money left over. So much, in fact, they're about to start looking for a new house. After, of course, Mark does something about taking a shower.

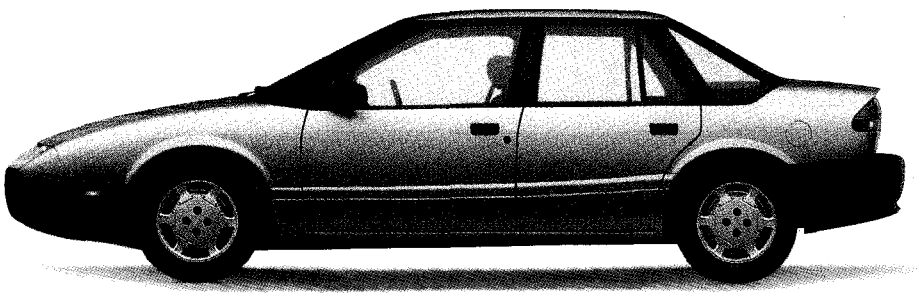

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

JULY 20, 1992

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 23

"DO THE WINDOWS OPEN?" . . . . . *Julie Hecht* 28

"JULY" (POEM) . . . . . *John Updike* 30

ANNALS OF THE ANTIQUITIES TRADE
(THE KANAKARIA MOSAICS CASE—PART II) . . . . . *Dan Hofstadter* 38

"BLUNT MORNING" (POEM) . . . . . *Edward Hirsch* 40

"THE FIREMEN" (POEM) . . . . . *Deborah Garrison* 54

THE ART WORLD . . . . . *Adam Gopnik* 66

LETTER FROM LONDON . . . . . *Julian Barnes* 69

AROUND CITY HALL . . . . . *Andy Logan* 74

BOOKS . . . . . *Louis Menand* 79

COVER: *Kathy Osborn Young*

DRAWINGS: *Lee Lorenz, Mimì Gnoli, Sidney Harris, Al Ross, John O'Brien, James Stevenson, Michael Maslin, Warren Miller, Donald Reilly, Robert Mankoff, Tom Cheney, Ed Arno, J. B. Handelsman, Charles Barsotti, Richard Cline, Stuart Leeds, Edward Koren, Robert Weber, Leo Cullum, Victoria Roberts*

THE NEW YORKER
20 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036
(212) 840-3800

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, vice-president and publisher; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director; Pamela H. Older, vice-president and director of manufacturing; Martha Kaplan, vice-president; Peter Armour, vice-president and circulation director. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 1-11 Hay Hill, London W1X7LF, England; Penn Brown & Associates, Inc., 175 Derby St., No. 36, Hingham, Mass. 02043; Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada M5E 1M2; Carol Orr & Co., 3500 Maple Ave., Suite 1060, Dallas, Tx. 75219; Catherine Billups & Co., Via Pinamonte Da Vimercate, No. 6, 20121 Milan, Italy. Vol. LXVIII, No. 22, July 20, 1992. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian goods and services tax registration number R123242885.
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Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $65.27 (includes G.S.T.). Other foreign, one year, $66.00, payable in advance.
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

IF acting, as drama teachers like to say, is the art of reacting, then why do so few of them bother to give instruction in the most common form of reaction—listening? It's not as if it were something that can't be coached. And yet the small number of actors who can make meaningful their non-speaking time onstage—Gielgud is probably the art's master—suggests that listening may be more difficult to do well than we imagine. It's especially challenging in a memory play, in which, typically, an actor must slink along the sidelines, listening to people for vast stretches. This is Tony Shalhoub's task in Herb Gardner's "Conversations with My Father," which just passed the hundredth-performance mark at the Royale. As Charlie Ross, Mr. Shalhoub must subtly observe long-ago events at a bar on the Lower East Side, yet somehow stay invested in the action. How does he do it?

"It's difficult, no question about it," the thirty-eight-year-old actor says. "Every night, certain lines in the play can trigger something from my own personal history." (That history includes growing up the ninth of ten children in a Lebanese Catholic family, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and making his stage début, at age six, in a school production of "The King and I.") "It's usually something that I haven't thought about for years. If I get going with that memory, I stop listening. The struggle then is to close down the train of thought and refocus on the speakers onstage." The process is further complicated, Mr. Shalhoub says, by the fact that the character who is most often across the footlights—Charlie's father, played by Judd Hirsch—is an especially poor listener. "People have missed the irony of the play's title. The father's conversations are one-sided. It's easy for that non-listening ethos to creep across to my corner of the stage. And I have to say that as I approach the end of my run"—he leaves the play on August 2, to resume a role on the television series "Wings"—"my listening has had a tendency to fade. But I don't think it ever quite fades into a TV or movie mode. You know, the 'my turn, your turn' kind of acting, where listening goes by the boards."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Day Dreams: The Music and Magic of Doris Day—Patty Carver stars in a musical by Jim Murphy (book) and David Levy and Darren Cohen (score and lyrics). Songs associated with Miss Day ("Que Será, Será," among others) are also included. In previews. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

OPENED RECENTLY

As You Like It—The first of two plays in the New York Shakespeare Festival free summer series in the Park. The cast includes Larry Bryggman, Richard Libertini, Elizabeth McGovern, Kathryn Meisle, Donald

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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Moffat, George Morfogen, Brad Sullivan, and Jake Weber. (Delacorte, Central Park near W. 81st St. Closes July 26. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

Balancing Act—A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Best of Forbidden Broadway—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. There is some new material, but our favorite sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number, "Madonna's Brain," in which David Mamet and Ron Silver try to teach Madonna to act and she ends up tearing off most of her clothes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Catskills on Broadway—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Louise DuArt does impressions. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Conversations with My Father—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Crazy for You—Loosely based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Death and the Maiden—Mike Nichols' Americanized version of Ariel Dorfman's play (in which Juliet Stevenson took London by storm last year) is a sad disappointment. The play, which is set in "a country that is probably Chile" and concerns a woman's attempt to punish the man she holds responsible for torturing her in captivity fifteen years before, is anything but subtle, and Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman are all grossly miscast. (3/30/92) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 2.)

Ethel Merman's Broadway—Rita McKenzie is Miss Merman in this one-woman show. Written by Miss McKenzie and Christopher Powich, who also directed. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Falsettos—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. We've never understood the appeal of Mr. Finn's trilogy. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. To us, though, it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (5/11/92) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities—Anna Deavere Smith is a wily mimic and verbal caricaturist, with a sharp, discerning ear and a tongue to match. The program, which she wrote as well as performs, takes as its point of departure the aftermath of the accident last summer, in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, in which a car carrying members of a Hasidic sect went out of control and killed a black child, Gavin Cato. Miss Smith impersonates more than twenty-five people who were either directly or indirectly concerned. Her net is far-flung, and, not surprisingly, she is often strongest when funniest. Those here gathered include Angela Davis, in California; Professor Leonard Jeffries, of City College; and the omnipresent Reverend Al Sharpton. There are also a couple of rabbis; a couple of rapping street kids; a local Jewish housewife; and, most notably, Norman Rosenbaum, an Australian whose brother Yankel was stabbed to death in retribution on the night of the accident. All the material in the show was based on actual interviews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Aug. 2.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Flaubert's Latest—A comedy by Peter Parnell that veers between funny and foolish. It's about a novelist in Connecticut who, having resolved to finish Flaubert's unfinished "Bouvard and Pécuchet," receives a surprise visit from the master himself, in the buoyant person of John Bedford Lloyd. Spirits are high—and the company good—across the board. With Jean DeBaer (as Flaubert's mistress), Mark Nelson, and Mary Louise Wilson, among others. David Saint directed, and James Noone designed the luscious setting, a garden in full summer bloom. (7/6/92) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes July 19.)

Guys and Dolls—A lively production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, is pretty much what you'd expect: some funny lines and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Jelly's Last Jam—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delin-

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eation of Morton himself. The show, an original if ever there was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. Also present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins, Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. Luther Henderson has adapted Morton's music and offered some music of his own; the lyrics were written by Susan Birkenhead; and Hope Clark was the choreographer. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Lotto (Experience the Dream)—A comedy by Cliff Roquemore, which has recently moved downtown from the Heckscher Theatre. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-9021.)

Man of La Mancha—The granddaddy of all junk musicals. This road-show revival is in every respect adequate to the occasion. Joan Diener and Laurence Guittard lead the cast. Tony Martinez, who plays Sancho, recently celebrated his two-thousandth performance in the role—and it shows. (5/11/92) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering adolescent. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Most Happy Fella—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Murder in Disguise—A gay mystery comedy by John Glines, with John Carhart III, Sean Flanigan, John Jason, Wayne Markover, Steve Silver, and Philip Stoehr. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 564-8038.)

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me—A play written and performed by David Drake. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

The Price—Eli Wallach's performance as an old Jewish furniture dealer is as much fun as anything in town. The rest of Arthur Miller's play—which is about two estranged brothers who must share their late father's estate—is no fun at all. The acting by all hands is good, though. Hector Elizondo and Joe Spano are the brothers and Debra Mooney is Elizondo's wife. John Tillinger directed. (6/22/92) (Roundabout Theatre, at Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes July 19.)

Red Diaper Baby—Josh Kornbluth's one-man show, recently seen at Second Stage. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Ruthless!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. She gave us the pip. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

Salomé and **Chinese Coffee**—Al Pacino stars in two shows that are running in repertory. The first is a revival of Wilde's camp classic which also stars Sheryl Lee, the young lady whose performance as Laura Palmer in "Twin Peaks" caused such a calm. The production is so bad that it 's a hoot—especially for those who don't like Pacino. But then, who doesn't like Pacino? The second production is a contemporary play by Ira Lewis. ("Salomé" was reviewed in our issue of 7/6/92.) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. "Salomé" closes July 29 and "Chinese Coffee" Aug. 1.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

A Streetcar Named Desire—Gregory Mosher's revival, with Jessica Lange in the role of Blanche DuBois, plays like a parody. It features a cuddly, avuncular Stanley (Alec Baldwin), a Stella (Amy Madigan) straight out of a Carol Burnett skit, and a lot of embarrassing staging. Miss Lange's acting is all "for the camera." One feels that she is trying to rescue the role of Blanche from decades' worth of assumptions about it but hasn't had much help or guidance from her director. (4/27/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the company—Patrick Breen, John Benjamin Hickey, Cordelia Richards, and Maria Tucci. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes July 26.)

Tubes—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

Two Trains Running—August Wilson's latest, set in a Pittsburgh luncheonette in 1969, is one of those plays in which all the performances seem to be groping hotly after award nominations and everything is freighted with Meaning. (4/27/92) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

Beau Jest: A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.). . . **Cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **Dancing at Lughnasa:** How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **The Fantasticks:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirty-second birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **Forever Plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **Lost in Yonkers:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon, set in Yonkers during the Second World War, is about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **Les Misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **Miss Saigon:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.). . . **Nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **Perfect Crime:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.). . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **The Secret Garden:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **Tony N' Tina's Wedding:** The never-ending nuptials of Anthony Angelo Nunzio and Valentina Lynne Vitale. With audience participation, as you probably know. (St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.). . . **The Will Rogers Follies:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. With Mac Davis. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

OVER in the theatre district, among the bistros and porn parlors of Eighth Avenue, is a low-lying commercial property with a sign above its door that reads "Fazil's Dance Studios." The place looks like a dive, but professional dancers know it as an institution, where, for decades, tap-dance greats have traded steps, musical-comedy stars have nailed down eight-bar breaks, and generations of hopefuls have mapped out their dreams. The other day, we hopped up to the third floor to watch a rehearsal conducted by Fred Darsow, a young choreographer whose small dance company will perform at Jacob's Pillow this week. We found him in a narrow, grimy room the size of a storefront, in which the windows had been thrown open to the sultry afternoon, and the wooden floor, reverberating with every footfall, seemed alive. With Mr. Darsow were a couple of guitarists, a singer, and five beautiful young women—his dancers. The women, who were flamenco experts, wore high-heeled shoes and flowing skirts. Mr. Darsow wore a sweatshirt, Bermuda shorts, and high-top leather sneakers. He is a modern dancer who fell in love with flamenco and has been studying it for the past several years, mostly in New York City, as well as using it in his choreography.

The rehearsal began with a bulerías, a fiesta dance with solos and with a group section at the end. At first, we couldn't see how the work differed from traditional flamenco. Then we became aware of a few unusual elements. For instance, it mattered exactly what direction the dancers faced. It mattered exactly where in a phrase the accents fell. Although everyone performed as an individual—this soloist's arm was raised to her shoulder, where it looked best, while that one's arm was low at her side—the dancers acted as an ensemble in meeting the step counts, some of which could be quite complex. We began to recognize how choreographic ideas were planted, then slyly developed. But this is really shop talk. What meant most to us was that we began to feel the dancing—clearly—as an impulse from the performers, shooting across the floor and up through the wooden chair we were perched on.

IN TOWN

Pilobolus—Opening performances of an engagement that runs through Aug. 15. July 20 and July 22 at 8: "The Particle Zoo," "Axons," "Clandestiny," "Pseudopodia," and "Sweet Purgatory" (New York première). . . . ¶ July 21 at 8: "Ciona," "Moonblind," "Shizen," "Walklyndon," "Ocellus," "Pseudopodia," and "Untitled." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Eleo Pomare/Zvi Gotheiner—With their companies in a free performance. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 17 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Septime Webre Dance—A company led by the resident choreographer of the American Repertory Ballet Company presents three premières, plus "D-Construction" and "And So It Goes." (LaGuardia High School Concert Hall, Amsterdam Ave. at 64th St. July 16-17 at 8. For reservations, call 877-3399.)

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Kent Lindemer and Jude Woodcock of Pilobolus in "Clandestiny"

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet—July 14 at 8:15: "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "In G Major," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3."... ¶ July 15 at 8:15: "Swan Lake," "A Musical Offering," and "The Four Seasons."... ¶ July 16 at 2: "Square Dance," "Ancient Airs & Dances," and "The Four Seasons."... ¶ July 16 at 8:15: "Swan Lake," "The Four Temperaments," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3."... ¶ July 17 at 8:15: "Serenade," "Delight of the Muses," "Herman Schmerman," and "Mercury."... ¶ July 18 at 2: "Swan Lake," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," and "In G Major."... ¶ July 18 at 8:15: "The Four Temperaments," "Herman Schmerman," "Mercury," and "The Four Seasons."... ¶ July 21 at 8:15: "Apollo," "In G Major," "Herman Schmerman," and "Mercury."... ¶ July 22 at 8:15: "Jeu de Cartes," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 2." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs. 1-518 587-3330. Through July 25.)

Jacob's Pillow—Fred Darsow's group of flamenco dancers and musicians from Spain, Mexico, and the U.S., plus Rhythm in Shoes, July 14-16 at 8, July 17 at 8:30, and July 18 at 2 and 8:30.... ¶ Jacob's Pillow Men Dancers: The Ted Shawn Legacy, July 21-22 at 8. Presenting works by Ted Shawn, José Limón, Stephen Petronio, and others. Through July 25. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

IF you should feel the need for some levity during the Democratic Convention, we suggest you stop in at the Ballroom to catch Jim Morris, the political impressionist and satirist. Last time Mr. Morris was in New York, over two years ago, he broke up audiences with his dead-on spoofs of Reagan, Bush, and assorted media figures. At this engagement (which will run through July 25), he'll be unveiling his Clinton and his Perot. He says he was hesitant to add the Texas tycoon to his repertoire. "It takes so much time to work up an impression of somebody, and I wanted to know, Are you running or not, Ross?"

We can understand his reluctance. Like an obsessive character actor, Mr. Morris doesn't just impersonate his subjects; he becomes them. The comedian, who is thirty-four, began lampooning Presidents about the time Reagan was sworn in, and his impressions of the Gipper and his heir are astonishingly lived-in. They're also quite wicked. "Mean, mean, mean, mean" is how Mike Wallace once described one of Morris's Bush roastings. But the President himself, who was also in the audience, reportedly laughed harder than anyone. "He's got a really good sense of humor about it," Morris says. "I tried to make him look like an ass, and I succeeded, and I retained my citizenship."

At the Ballroom, Mr. Morris will give each candidate plenty of time to air his views, though "Bush will get a little more time, because, of course, he's the President, and he's had more time to screw things up." The show will also include a "news conference," during which members of the audience can grill the "politicians." With the Convention in town, and with the campaign already at a furious pitch, Morris plans to incorporate daily events into his act. "People can come down and see me act these things out," he says. "Who knows? Maybe we'll even get Clinton to come down. It looks like he'll do anything."

As in the past, Morris will be giving the fourth estate a zetz or two. He's especially excited about a possible bit in which Perot and Sam Donaldson will go at it. He'll also be wheeling out Reagan for a cameo, in which the former President "will salute his successor for all the fine work he's done in carrying out the Reagan error."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer **KT SULLIVAN**, who won this year's Outstanding Female Vocalist award from the Manhattan Association of Cabarets, is currently making her début in the Oak Room. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Politico mocker **JIM MORRIS** is currently in residence. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. Singer-pianist **BLOSSOM DEARIE** performs on Fridays and Saturdays at six-thirty and Sundays at three.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. The schedule, in part: the Sonny Preston trio on July 16; **GARY BARTZ'S** foursome July 17-18; and Carla Cook on July 19. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. Improbable as it may sound, **CHARLIE WATTS**, the drummer for the Rolling Stones, is a lifelong jazz aficionado. The focal point of his passion is Charlie Parker. Some thirty years ago, he wrote a children's book, titled "Ode to a High Flying Bird," based on Parker's life; last year, he released a Parker tribute album; and now comes a live album titled "A Tribute to Charlie Parker with Strings." If you want to check out this quintessential rock drummer's jazz chops, you'll find him leading his quintet here July 14-19. First set at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can stand at the bar—finally a club where they don't force you to drink—and mull over photographs from great shows you've missed. Faux lounge lizards **BUSTER POINDEXTER AND HIS BANSHEES OF BLUE** are on hand July 17-18. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because, once the first chord is struck, the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. A trio consisting of **BUSTER WILLIAMS, STEPHEN SCOTT,** and **YORON ISRAEL** is in swing here through July 18, and the **PHILLIP HARPER** trio begins work on July 20. Music from ten. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian little Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage and no music schedule. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over their Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have been known to turn up and tune up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The main music room here—the Café Carlyle—is closed for the summer, but across the hall, in the intimate Bemelmans Bar (named after the Austrian painter whose whimsical murals surround the room and spill onto the ceiling), singer-and-pianist Kurt Wieting provides the tunes from nine-thirty Mondays through Fridays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire; the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your shopping needs taken care of in one convenient location. The **ROYAL CRESCENT MOB** is here on July 15. Music from eight on Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A club that features "only Chicago-area blues artists working with their regular Chicago blues bands." This concept may not appeal to New York blues artists, but it could save local blues fans a trip to the Midwest. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A candlelit basement restaurant within ticket-scalping distance of the Palladium. Perhaps because of its out-of-the-loop location, Condon's is one of the city's more low-key jazz clubs, a place where the seating arrangement doesn't seem intended as some kind of punishment. **PHOEBE LÉGÈRE** is here for three weeks beginning on July 14. One has never known how seriously to take Légère, and she seems to like it that way. On the one hand, there's the fact that she's a trained pianist, cellist, and accordionist, the fact that she has a four-octave vocal range, and the fact that she has written an opera. On the other hand, there's the fact that she appeared as a blind blonde in "The Toxic Avenger II," the fact that she is double-jointed and can play piano with one leg hitched up behind her head, and the fact that her opera is about a three-hundred-and-fifty-pound cleaning woman who becomes President. Go figure, but go. Music at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Sundays and at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one on Fridays and Saturdays.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The cheery white downstairs bar has French windows giving on to the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the real clamor is indoors. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. Pop standards are sung/shouted, usually with altered, risqué lyrics; wisecracks are fired across the room; and everyone laughs too hard. Upstairs there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

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Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—Where swordfish leap on almost every wall. Where a cat with black and white spots sometimes walks the length of the bar. Where barbirds stare at football on the tube. And where, between the Sinatra and Streisand songs that emanate from the jukebox, one can often hear snatches of live bluegrass and Irish music floating in from the bright back room. On July 17 you can catch fiddler Tony DeMarco and Indian tabla-player Nipu Ganguly (a surprising duo for Hibernian harmonies, but this *is* New York). Sets at nine and ten-thirty on Fridays.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangements in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement make flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. The **Mingus Dynasty** is in action July 14-19; **Mose Allison's** trio gets started on July 21. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **Les Paul** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

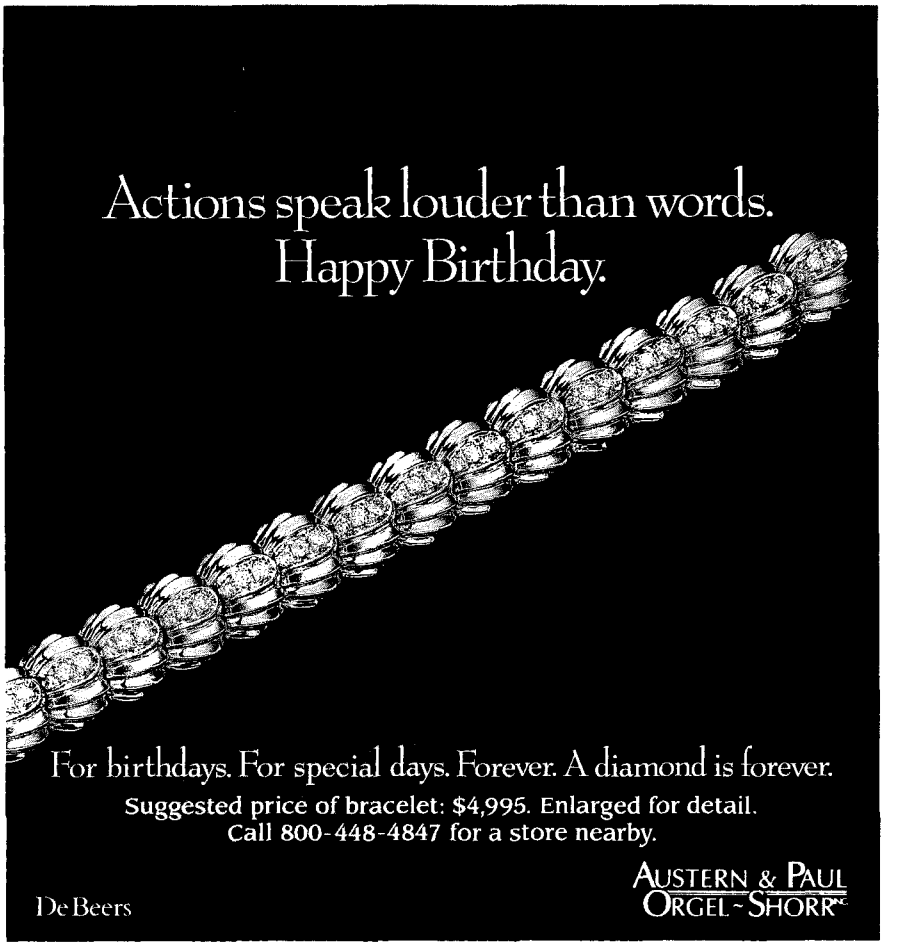
Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—An improbably located honky-tonk with a Wright Brothers-era airplane suspended from the ceiling, a dance floor where you can kick up some dust, and a balcony for quiet types. **Billy Bragg** comes in on July 14. Over the past eight years, Bragg has made a handful of indispensable albums, the most recent of which is "Don't Try This at Home." Anyone who still thinks of Bragg as a sort of socialist novelty act—an ideologue with a hard Cockney accent and a

SUMMER SCHOOL

There's often something fishy in the air at the eastern fringe of the Financial District, especially during these warmer months, when the Fulton Fish Market exudes its aroma with uncommon largesse. Late last month, this olfactory sensation was reinforced by the installation of nine enormous images of fish, suspended from the elevated portion of the F.D.R. Drive at the foot of Wall Street. Not just any old fish, mind you. Only species that ichthyologists certified as native to the waters surrounding Manhattan qualified, such as Pomatomus saltatrix *(the bluefish),* Tautogna onitis *(the tautog), and* Paralichthys dentatus *(the summer flounder). Another fish,* Morone saxatilis *(the striped bass), to be installed shortly near Old Slip, two blocks south, will complete the group.*

The fishes' profiles are meticulously cut from twelve-foot-long aluminum sheets, and their basic contours are fancifully highlighted, rather in the manner of a topographical map. "The idea was to pull out the essence of each fish and intensify the colors," says Mark Bunnell, who has coördinated the "fish beacons" project for Quennell Rothschild Associates, the landscape architects overseeing the city's revamping of that stretch of the waterfront.

There are also meandering pathways of smaller piscatory silhouettes, painted on the pavements below, which serve to lead pedestrians across South Street and toward the esplanade and piers. Since all this was accomplished slightly ahead of schedule, it would seem that for once the work went—well, swimmingly.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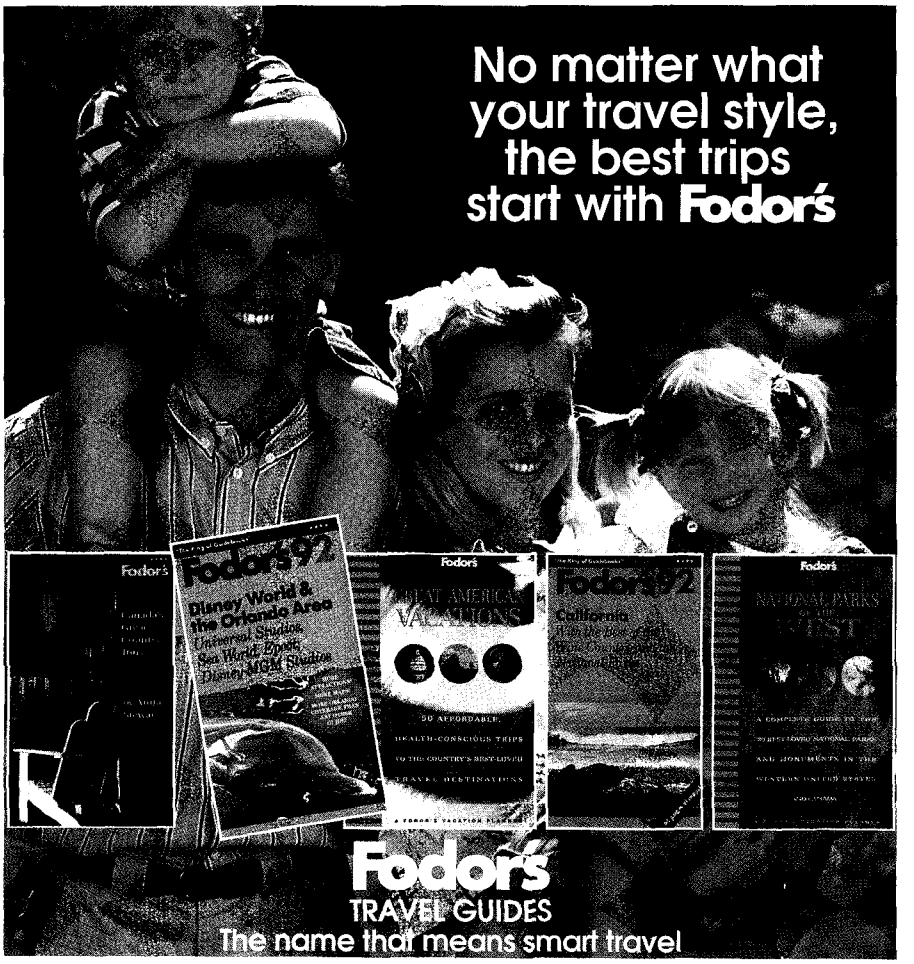

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

scrappy guitar—is likely to be surprised by what he's been doing lately. The new album includes the blithe pop single "Sexuality," which Bragg wrote with former Smith Johnny Marr, and the wheeling, country-tinged "You Woke Up My Neighborhood," which he penned with Peter Buck, of R.E.M. Bragg has a goofy, self-effacing manner, but he loves to talk politics onstage, so one is likely to hear some well-chosen words about the Bush White House. Music after nine. Dining.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drink concoctions lend the place a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. Larry McCray is here on July 16; Little Mike and the Tornadoes perform July 17-18. Sets from nine-fifteen, except on Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—If the hero of a movie walked down this creepy, semi-deserted block, the audience would be throwing things at the screen and shouting "Turn back! Turn back!" Thanks to this fine alternative-music club, though, there's usually a fairly steady flow of traffic through these parts. This week, intrepid young New Yorkers will be coming to see **material issue,** the **veldt,** and the **cavedogs** on July 17. The last is a Boston-based power trio in the mode of the Who and the Jam. The group's 1990 début, "Joyrides for Shut-Ins," was a collection of blissful power-pop crunchers that brought to mind skinny ties, amphetamines, and smashed amplifiers. July 18 belongs to **arrested development, disposable heroes of hiphoprisy,** and **me phi me.** Me Phi Me is a young Tennessee-based rapper who just released his début album, a languorous, up-with-individuality record full of acoustic guitars, of all things.

Jerry Lee Lewis at Tramps

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. Shows are usually at ten on Thursdays, at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays, and at nine other nights.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. "Say It with Music," an Irving Berlin revue, is currently under way. **kaye ballard, liz callaway, joe cocuzzo, jason graae, jay leonhart, ron raines,** and **fred wells** make up the cast. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Sixty-five years-worth of vodka and caviar. Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret, in which **ellen kaye** and **mark nadler** perform on July 22. Shows Sundays at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Song of Singapore Theatre, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—This is the new home of the New York Swing Dance Society, a group of Lindy Hop enthusiasts who've been putting on Sunday-night dance parties for several years now (the Cat Club was their former home base). Swing music at a mock forties Singapore night club—the musical "Song of Singapore" was put on here—may sound like an odd juxtaposition, but who cares? Strike up the band. **vince giordano and the nighthawks** hold forth on July 19. Sets begin at eight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" **ariwa posse** and **mad professor** are here on July 15; **ismael lo** turns up July 16-17. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Upstairs at this gilt-railinged, lamé-curtained club is a plush little nook called the Blue Room, which boasts celestial-motif wallpaper and a profusion of deep-sea blue. The racket of midtown can't find you here. The current attraction (Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine) is **ann hampton callaway,** a fine singer-pianist who can imitate Billie Holiday and Marlene Dietrich, sing an E-flat above high C, and say, without sounding immodest, "People often come up to me and ask why I'm not famous." Apart from a few requisite supper-club numbers—at an engagement a few years back, the audience requested "Memory" three times a night—Ms. Callaway's catalogue includes her own songs, songs by lesser-known New York composers, and songs improvised around suggestions made by musically inclined patrons.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pine-wood than a ski lodge. **gil goldstein** and **zebra coast** are here through July 19, and a "fotet" led by **ralph peterson** begins work on July 21. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **miles evans** is in action on Mondays. The music begins every night at ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, located near what was once called the Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. But the sound system has been known to be temperamental. The **family stand** appears on July 14, and the fifties rock-and-roll wild man **jerry lee lewis** performs on July 18. Music from eight on weeknights and from eight-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." July 14-19 belongs to **ahmad jamal, james commack,** and **david bowler.** The **dewey redman** quartet begins a run on July 21. The **vanguard jazz orchestra** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A relatively young club that has already managed to make a scene. Wetlands is usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, but the club has also been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. Shows here can be absurdly sweaty and tight—the club seems to have a hard time turning people away—and it can be hard to get a view of the stage. Still, Wetlands is such a maze of a place that there's always some mellow corner to retire to. Shows from ten.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

"IN two hours, there'll be no young people on the streets of Milano," said our rakish young driver. "Tutti Frutti. Everyone go to Tutti Frutti. Very American. Only more fun. Because we are more fun. Yes?"

He was half right, at least. By eleven o'clock, even Corso Como, Milan's West Broadway, was devoid of young'uns. Meanwhile, our Guns N' Roses-loving driver couldn't get closer than a mile from the entrance to Parco di Rosso, the amusement park on the edge of town where Tutti Frutti takes place each Thursday evening. Jeep Cherokees and Harleys were parked every which way. Partygoers shoved and kicked and clawed for admission. Fists flew. Women were afforded no special courtesy. Short people were mauled. "I have friends here," our driver said, "but I go with you. Americans get in *uno, due, tre.*" It was more like *trentuno* when we finally crashed against the bouncers, and made our way in.

Tutti Frutti resembles Pleasure Island, where Pinocchio and his truant buddies caroused before they turned into donkeys. Three dance floors, two swimming pools, slides, rides, trees, kick-boxing exhibitions, more bars than there are colors in a Missoni show, and at least a thousand people—some of whom had driven here from towns in the Tuscan foothills more than two hours away—singing the choruses to all of *Billboard's* Hot Dance Singles. The last thing our driver said before we lost him was "Pushing is important, because we must get in. You have plenty clubs. We have only Tutti Frutti."

Exiting driverless—and mapless—we soon discovered that the town isn't great on cabs, either. After waiting for half an hour in a deserted piazza, we dialled the Milanese version of 911 and announced ourselves as hapless Americans with no way back to our hotel. "Tutti Frutti?" they asked with assurance. "Wait ten minutes. Don't hitchhike and don't use your weapon."

The next day, our driver apologized for his disappearance, though he never explained where he'd gone, or asked how we'd got home. But he was desperate to know if we'd had "as much fun as you have in New York City." All except the weapon part.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Serious Fun!—Lincoln Center's annual survey of nontraditional performing arts and artists. July 14-15: Fernanda Montenegro and Fernanda Torres, a mother-daughter team, in "The Flash and Crash Days," a play by Gerald Thomas about mother-daughter relations. . . . ¶ July 16-17: Eric Bogosian in his new work, "Dog Show." . . . ¶ July 18: "49 Blues Songs for a Jealous Vampire," a presentation by the Hittite Empire, a performance group from Los Angeles. . . . ¶ July 21-22: Karen Finley in her new work, "A Certain Level of Denial." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Evenings at 8.)

"Lesbians Who Kill"—Deb Margolin's play, with Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver. (One Dream, 232 West Broadway. 274-1450. July 15-18 and July 22 at 8. Through July 25.)

Dixon Place—July 16-18 at 8: Five Lesbian Brothers. . . . ¶ July 17 at 10:30: Frank Maya. (258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Museum Mile Festival—The fourteenth annual open house takes place on July 14, from six to nine in the evening, when Fifth Avenue between 82nd and 104th Streets is accessible to pedestrians and street performers only, and the museums along the way are free of charge.

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain" includes more than a hundred works of art, from a wood ceiling to a mosaic dado to an ivory coffin. Through Sept. 27. . . . ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. Through Sept. 13. . . . ¶ "Modern Design: 1890-1990" shows off the museum's holdings in twentieth-century furniture, architectural and design drawings, glass, ceramics, and other objects. . . . NOTE: The museum's roof garden, planted with eight sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"In the Realm of Architecture." This retrospective of the work of Louis Kahn (1901-74) includes about three hundred drawings, sketches, models, and photographs. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ "Antoni Tàpies in Print" presents more than a hundred lithographs, intaglio prints, and illustrated books, from the forties to the present, by the Catalan artist. Through Aug. 9. . . . ¶ Twenty-four paintings, drawings, and prints by Philip Guston. Through July 26. . . . ¶ Eighty magazine-and-newspaper photocollages by Stephen Kroninger, displayed alongside the versions that appeared in *Time*, the *Village Voice*, *Rolling Stone*, and elsewhere. Through Aug. 9. . . . ¶ Erika Rothenberg's "House of Cards" installation features nearly a hundred fake greeting cards dealing with social, political, and racial issues. Through Aug. 25. . . . ¶ A small, pleasant exhibition of the Finnish designer Kaj Franck's gloriously spare designs. Particularly impressive is his Kilta tableware, which was in production from 1953 to 1975 and still looks contemporary. Its finely tuned colors, in such contrasting shades as deep aqua green and chartreuse, seem like refined versions of our own Fiestaware. Through Oct. 12. . . . ¶ "More than One Photography" features sixty post-1980 works that incorporate photography in one way or another, drawn from each of the museum's six curatorial departments. Through July 19. . . . NOTE: The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. This summer's program is dedicated to the music of John Cage. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Masterpieces from the Guggenheim Collection" is on view, along with Dan Flavin's fluorescent-light installation, "Untitled (to Tracy, to celebrate the love of a lifetime)." Through Aug. 27. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge on Tuesdays from 5 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"From Brancusi to Bourgeois" includes, as well, Kandinsky, Andre, Ryman, and Beuys. Through Aug. 27. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—An exhibition of landscapes, seascapes, portraits, and boxing scenes by painter and lithographer George Bellows (1882-1925). Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ The second part of a show of recent additions to the museum's collection; more than seventy paintings and sculptures are included. Through Aug. 23. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Painters of a New Century: The Eight & American Art," an exhibition devoted to the work of the turn-of-the-century painters known as the Eight: Arthur B. Davies, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan. . . . ¶ "Tacit Transit," a new installation, by Korean-born artist Jin Soo Kim, that consists of wire-mesh modules and found objects. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ A display of first-edition etchings from Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Carceri d'Invenzioni" group. Through July 26. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien." Chang Dai-chien (1899-1983) trained in the traditional Chinese manner—learning to copy the work of the masters. He proved to be so skilled at this that he occasionally crossed the line from copyist to forger (as have numerous other Chinese painters), and today some museums display paintings attributed to the great painters of centuries past but actually executed by Chang. This exhibition features many of his great works—both imitations and out-and-out fakes—and the breadth of styles and colors is impressive. Indeed, this show is, oddly enough, the perfect introduction to Chinese painting for those interested in looking at it from a postmodern perspective. As a parable of style and identity, the show might have had more bite had it appeared ten years ago, when questions of authorship were more immediate issues than they are today. Chang's herculean ambition resembled the boundless ego of Picasso, a link not lost on Chang himself, who took the trouble to engineer a meeting with the great Spanish master, marking the event with a photograph that he flaunted for the rest of his life. Following his flight from China, in 1949, Chang sought a more international, modern profile, splashing his paints with the best of the drippers, and developing an especially garish palette. What Chang failed to recognize, though, was that, hundreds of years before the advent of modern art, much of Chinese painting already exhibited a high degree of abstraction. Through July 19. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—Eight paintings from the "North American Trophy Room" series, by Honduran artist Francisco Alvarado-Juárez. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ The museum's twelfth "Artist in the Marketplace" exhibition includes thirty-six emerging painters, sculptors, photographers, and installation artists. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ "Contemporary Painting and Calligraphy from Japan." Through Aug. 2. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Bridges and Boundaries: African-Americans and American Jews." This exhibition—comprising three hundred and fifty art works, photographs, and documents—explores the complex relationship of coöperation and tension between the two groups. Through July 19. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Sketching at Home and Abroad" presents more than a hundred British landscape drawings and watercolors—from the literal to the lyrical—by Turner, Constable, Wilson, Gainsborough, and others. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ Puss in Boots, the Master Cat, is the subject of an exhibition that spans three hundred years' worth of illustrations, beginning with Charles Perrault's original manuscript of Mother Goose stories. Through Aug. 9. . . . ¶ "Leaping the Fence," a show that examines, through illustrated treatises, the development of the English landscape garden. Through Aug. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5, Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"St. Petersburg as It Was Leningrad" features forty lithographs by the Russian graphic artist Anatoly Kaplan (1902-1980). Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Walt Whitman and New York." The Long Island-born Brooklynite is celebrated in a show that juxtaposes prose and poetry with nineteenth-century paintings, prints, and photographs. Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from

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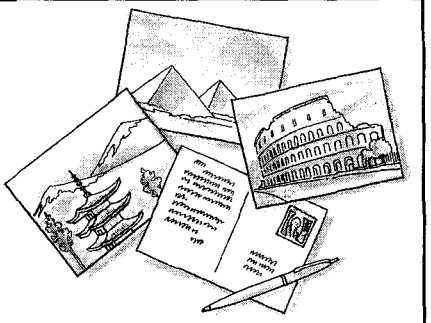

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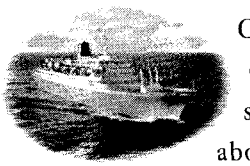

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ART–Cont'd

nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York last summer at the IBM Gallery.... ¶ An exhibition of fifty paintings, watercolors, and lithographs by the Dutch artist Adriaan Lubbers (1892-1954), whose fascination with New York City is reflected in his urban landscapes. Through July 26.... ¶ Two shows of New York images. "Empire City," an exhibition of all the paintings and drawings in the Robert R. Preato collection, features work by George Luks, Abraham Walkowitz, and Theresa Bernstein. "Recent Gifts: Works on Paper" is a display of woodcuts, lithographs, etchings, drawings, and watercolors from the thirties to the eighties. Among the etchings are a group of thirteen made between 1927 and 1930 by the Social Realist Philip Reisman (1904-92). Both shows through Aug. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and twenty-four prints, drawings, and watercolors by the German artist *Lovis Corinth (1858-1925).* Through Sept. 13.... ¶ "Masterworks of American Impressionism from the Pfeil Collection" features eighty-seven paintings, by such artists as Mary Cassatt, Childe Hassam, Lila Cabot Perry, and John Twachtman. Through Aug. 30.... ¶ "The Artist's Eye," the first in a series of exhibitions to be curated by artists who are academy members. Philip Pearlstein has done the selection here; among the forty works on view are Ryder's "Marine" and Sargent's "Portrait of Monet." Through Sept. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New-York Historical Society, *170 Central Park* W., at 77th St.—"Ansel Adams: The Early Years" covers the years 1919 to 1941 and includes, along with the famous Western landscapes, lesser-known still-lifes, portraits, and cityscapes. Through Oct. 11.... ¶ If you can't shake Convention fever, take a stroll through "Party Time: Presidential Campaigns Since 1832," a large gathering of glorious political artifacts. Admission is free to Democratic National Convention delegates. Through Sept. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Hail, Delirium!," a show of illustrated books and prints by Dorothea Tanning. Through July 18. (Third Floor Gallery.)... ¶ One of the more comprehensive shows in the current crop of Walt Whitman centenary celebrations is "In Life or Death Forever": a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. Through Sept. 12. (Berg Exhibition Room.)... ¶ The forays of Percy Bysshe Shelley into the political arena are chronicled in the letters, manuscripts, and bank checks on view in "Shelley: Unacknowledged Legislator." Through Aug. 8. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room.)... ¶ "On the Edge" is an exhibition of more than two hundred black-and-white and color photographs from the covers and pages of *Vogue.* Through Aug. 1. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.)... ¶ A small, rotating display of drawings by Charles Addams is on view in the north wing of the Third Floor Gallery. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88) designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his own sculptures. The entire range of his work is on view, from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures through several types of stone carvings, and including documentation of his prodigious public-art projects. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with sculptures. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Short List—Burt Silverman, Society of Illustrators, 128 E. 63rd St. (open Tuesday evenings until 8, through July 31); **Richard Smith,** Feigen, 49 E. 68th St. (through July 20).

Francisco Alvarado-Juárez at the Bronx Museum of the Arts

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Ron Janowich/Frederic Thursz—Janowich has lately been playing with the shape of his canvases, and this experimentation seems to be paying off. The most interesting work is shaped like a horseshoe, a form that neatly fills one's field of vision. Thursz has covered several panels in thick, glossy paint; according to a nearby statement, the works were inspired by the death, at Dachau, of an uncle he'd met only once. A group of larger panels, displayed in a smaller gallery, are gripping. They're arranged in pairs of similar colors—two mustards, two purples—and they make for a poignant study in the dynamics of attraction. Through July 31. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—William Garbe, McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through July 31); **William King,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through July 31).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Irina Nakhova—An exhibition that consists of large paintings of eyes, and small, wall-mounted sculptures of torsos with an occasional foot or shoe appropriately situated on the floor. The torsos, which have been embedded, variously, with putti, straws, and a pot of eggs, are the more ingratiating works, while the eyes, which are grisaille with colored accents, are richer, less illustrational, more mysterious. Through July 31. (Kind, 136 Greene St. Closed Mondays.)

Will the Real Erik Oppenheim Please Stand Up?—The most eye-catching work in an otherwise uninspiring group show at Blum Helman Warehouse (80 Greene St.; through Aug. 28)

"Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain" at the Metropolitan Museum

is Erik Oppenheim's "By Proxy," in which the performance-artist-as-art-dealer has left on view a projector with slides of the work of three young artists and a set of polite instructions on how to view the work, contact the "dealer," and leave the piece in working order for other gallerygoers to enjoy. There is one slide of a self-deprecating Alexander Viscio burying himself in dirt and two of sculptures by Eric Magnuson—a tongue and a pair of pants that are very long in the crotch.... ¶ Upstairs, at Postmasters' "Morality Café" (80 Greene St.; through July 25), Oppenheim's impeccably good manners have given way to the boiling temperament more closely associated with the art world of the early seventies. In this show about "ethical decision-making processes," John Lekay chose to exhibit, under his own name, works he owns by his artist friends, and to install Oppenheim in person as a dealer. Curator Kenny Schachter and the gallery later objected to the nature and scale of the piece, and to the presence of Oppenheim. Lekay in turn charged them with trying to interfere with his artistic process. Hell broke loose when Schachter insisted that Lekay contain his piece in the space that had been allotted him. With Oppenheim's encouragement, Lekay went into a frenzy (which he later likened to the artistic furies of Pollock), destroyed his installation and most of the art within it, and insisted that the debris remain as his part of the show. Postmasters agreed, on the condition that the artist not enter the gallery again. Lekay has added lengthy statements to the remains of the installation "by proxy," and the whole situation overshadows everything else on display. What at first sounds like the artist's adolescent inability to recognize the boundaries between self and world—a notion supported by Lekay's Duchampian appropriation of his friends' art—ends up reading more like a deliberate act of provocation intended to challenge the very basis of the exhibition. At the "Morality Café," coffee and lemonade are served.

Group Shows—At **A/D,** 560 Broadway: A room appointed by three artists. Roy Lichtenstein's wallpaper with a living-room image is as lustreless as his recent paintings. But Gerhard Richter's colorfully gridded wall-to-wall carpeting, which is recognizably related to the artist's past work, would do any rec room proud. On the carpet sit four of Donald Judd's gorgeous plywood chairs, which are stained in crisp aniline colors and have the design simplicity of Shaker furniture. Through July 31. (Closed Mondays.)... **Luhring Augustine,** 130 Prince St.: A strangely thoughtful group show, which begins with some handsome works on paper, from 1979, by the Austrian Arnulf Rainer. Each consists of two related masses of smudges, one airy and drawn by an ape, the other dense and painted by the artist. Near them is a towering sculpture by Paul McCarthy (one of the standouts of L.A. MOCA's "Helter Skelter" exhibition) that is its own kind of double whammy. It consists of two huge skunks standing on tree stumps with their erect penises in their paws. *It is a bawdily funny sculpture, which* poaches on Koons territory while belittling the sort of craft that underlies Koons' work. Stormy charcoal drawings by Joyce Pensato serve as a bridge between Rainer and McCarthy. They depict Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck wearing maniacal smiles, and are quite compelling—infused as they are with a thoughtful feminist anger. Also on view is a work by McCarthy consisting of a small battered trunk filled with soiled dolls. It is dated 1977-82, several years before Mike Kelley's first doll piece, and seems intended to establish McCarthy's historical precedence. Through July 31.

Short List—Carl Andre, *Pretto, 103 Sullivan St.* (opens at noon, closed Mondays, through July 31); **Douglas Davis,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through July 17); **Dan Flavin,** Rubin-Spangle, 395 West Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 31); **Viola Frey,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through July 31); **Guercino,** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. (closed Mondays, open Saturdays, and Wednesdays until 8; through Aug. 1); **Kwong Lum,** Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St. (through July 31); **Lisa Mackie** and **Joanne Mc Farland,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through July 31); **David Rabinowitch,** Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through Oct. 31); **Regina Silveira,** LedisFlam, 584 Broadway (closed Mondays, through Aug. 7).

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PHOTOGRAPHY

FOR New Yorkers who go for the visual jazz of Manhattan—its neon signs, its packed-together skyscrapers, its jam of snaking traffic—there's nothing like a trip to Tokyo. Tokyo's got all this and more: more colored lights, more confusion, more contradictions, more visual electricity to get one's adrenaline going than any other city. For New Yorkers who don't speak Japanese, it's a place that feels both familiar and otherworldly. So it's fitting that from Tokyo comes *déjà-vu*, a glossy photographic quarterly full of visual oomph and urban sophistication.

The latest issue of *déjà-vu*, No. 9, devotes many pages to the work of American photographer Nan Goldin and to that of the Japanese photographers Shinzo Shimao and Nobuyoshi Araki; these features are presented under the heading "Private Life." Why aren't more photography magazines—or, for that matter, more galleries and museums—this alive to individualism and this attentive to differences? Goldin's edgily beautiful, oh-so-real shots (of her friends), followed by Shimao's idiosyncratically personal record (mostly of his family and home), and Araki's hyper-real, bright-colored, in-your-face still-lifes (of food representing much more than just food), make for an East-West portfolio that really has something to show about contemporary life. (Interviews with these photographers, in Japanese, with summaries in English, are also included.)

This issue of the magazine also has state-of-the-art reproductions of the work of a number of other Japanese photographers, a collection of book and exhibition reviews, and a variety of essays on photographic topics. If you want to know what's going on in Japanese photography today, or if you'd simply like a different take on photography in America, *déjà-vu* is a reliable source. (A year's subscription costs a hundred and fifty dollars; order from photo-planète Co., Ltd., 3-21-14-402 Higashi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan 150.)

"AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHS: TRADITIONAL THEMES BY CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHERS"—Works by Lynn Davis, Sally Mann, Robert Mapplethorpe, Richard Misrach, Annie Leibovitz, and Bruce Weber. Through Aug. 14. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

"RECENT CELEBRITY PHOTOGRAPHY"—An exhibition of seventy color and black-and-white portraits by such artists as Brigitte Lacombe, Steven Meisel, Matthew Rolston, and Helmut Newton. Through Sept. 6. (American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. Open daily, except Mondays, noon to 4; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6.)

SHORT LIST—BILL BRANDT and AART KLEIN, Lowinsky, 575 Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 24); BEVAN DAVIES, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through July 31); ARTHUR MONES, McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through July 31); EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (closed Mondays, through Aug. 13); MARTIN PARR, Borden, 560 Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 31); MAGGIE STEBER, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (through Aug. 1); THOMAS TULIS, Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Aug. 14); TODD WEBB, Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (closed Mondays, through Aug. 28).

MUSIC

YEARNING is a constant theme in Schubert. As a songwriter, he was drawn again and again to poetry about homesickness, wanderlust, unrequited love. No fewer than six times, he found music for "Nur Wer die Sehnsucht Kennt," that curiously haunting lyric from Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," which says, "Only one who knows longing knows what I suffer." The most familiar English version—it comes with Tchaikovsky's setting—is "None but the lonely heart," which doesn't quite capture the peculiarly active, devouring quality: not the lonely heart but the yearning, aching heart, the heart that knows only that home, or love, or fulfillment, lies elsewhere, unfound. Even Schubert's instrumental music yearns, seeks, asks.

Does it narrow appreciation of this quality to reflect—as prominent scholarship has recently done—on its possible relation to the composer's bohemian life style and homosexuality? Artistic expression roots itself in the particular and branches toward the universal. Both aspects are moving; our responsiveness to Schubert is not exactly changed but somehow quickened by the fuller picture of his life that is now being drawn. And the apprentice in "Die Schöne Müllerin"—the boy who sets out into the world and loves, yearns, and dies without ever approaching fulfillment—seems more than ever an embodiment of Schubert himself, or of one fantasy self he imagined. Sanford Sylvan, one of the most poetically responsive of Schubert singers, is to perform the cycle, at Tanglewood, on July 22 at 8:30 P.M., with his excellent collaborator David Breitman; we're eager to hear it afresh.

IN TOWN—OPERA

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—Opening performances of the season, which runs through Nov. 15. CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA and PAGLIACCI, in a double bill, conducted by Steven Sloane; with RoseMarie Freni, Vincenzo Scuderi, and Max Wittges in the former, and Gwynne Geyer, Antonio Barasorda, and Sigmund Cowan in the latter. (July 16 at 8 and July 19 at 1:30.)... LA TRAVIATA, with Gail Dobish, Michael Rees Davis, and Victor Ledbetter; conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (July 17 and July 22 at 8.)... LA BOHÈME, with Elizabeth Hynes, Patricia Racette, Martin Thompson, and Jeffrey Kneebone; Mark Gibson. (July 18 at 1:30.)... 110 IN THE SHADE, a musical by Harvey Schmidt, to a libretto by Tom Jones (based on N. Richard Nash's 1953 play "The Rainmaker"), in a new production, with Karen Ziémba, Brian Sutherland, Richard Muenz, and Henderson Forsythe; Paul Gemignani. (July 18 and July 21 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

KIROV OPERA—Completing its two-week-long visit, with all performances conducted by Valery Gergiev and presented in Russian. Mussorgsky's BORIS GODUNOV, wherein pretenders squabble over the czardom, and a simpleton gets the last word. (July 13-15 and July 18, all at 8.)... ¶ Tchaikovsky's THE QUEEN OF SPADES, a cautionary tale for gamblers, in which three cards lead to three fatalities, in three acts. (July 16 at 8.)... ¶ Prokofiev's THE FIERY ANGEL, a story of demonic possession unloosed within a sadomasochistic ménage à trois. (July 17 at 8 and July 18 at 2.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

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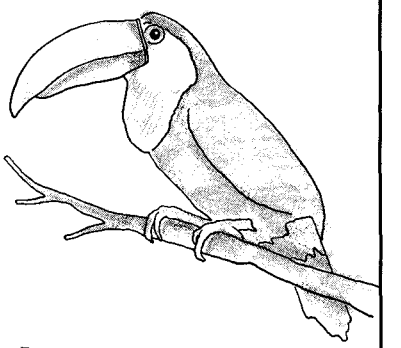

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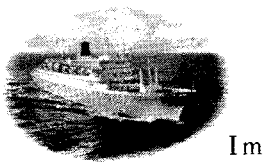

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Jean-Yves Thibaudet at Caramoor

in a cabaret, including such topical speculations as Pavarotti's bid for the Presidency (to the strains of "Rigoletto") and Madonna's début at the Met (with apologies to the composer of "Carmen"). (Don't Tell Mama, 343 W. 46th St. 757-0788. July 13-14 at 10.)

New York Grand Opera—Vincent La Selva conducts staged performances. July 15 at 7:30: "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci."... ¶ July 22 at 7:30: "Madame Butterfly." (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Hell's Kitchen Opera—Presenting "Emma," composed by Murray Boren to a libretto, drawn from Mormon history, by Eric Samuelson. (Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 415 W. 59th St. July 17-19 at 8. For information about tickets, call 752-2887.)

IN TOWN—CONCERTS

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts music by Tchaikovsky. July 15 at 7: The Overture-Fantasy "Romeo and Juliet," Symphony No. 2 (the "Little Russian"), and Serenade for Strings (Op. 48).... ¶ July 16 at 8: The Piano Concerto No. 1 (featuring Shura Cherkassky) and Symphony No. 6 (the "Pathétique").... **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 6:45 and open to ticketholders, members of the orchestra will play Tchaikovsky's *String Quartet No. 2*. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—July 13: The Tokyo String Quartet plays Mozart's "Hunt" Quartet (K. 458) and Beethoven's Second "Razumovsky" Quartet (Op. 59, No. 2); the Shanghai String Quartet joins them to perform Mendelssohn's Octet.... **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders, the Shanghai String Quartet will play Mendelssohn's A-Minor Quartet (Op. 13).... ¶ July 14-15: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Mozart's "Posthorn" Serenade and Violin Concerto No. 3 (with Itzhak Perlman), as well as Haydn's Symphony No. 59.... **NOTE:** In pre-concert recitals, beginning both nights at 7 and open to ticketholders, the duo-piano team of David Bradshaw and Cosmo Buono will render nineteenth-century transcriptions from Rossini operas.... ¶ July 16: Pianist Alicia de Larrocha performs Mozart's C-Minor Fantasy and Sonata (K. 475/457) and numerous works by Xavier Montsalvatge (including a set of songs, to be sung by soprano Olga Serra).... **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders, pianist Richard Shirk will offer works by Mozart and Mendelssohn.... ¶ July 17-18: Jesus Lopez-Cobos conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Haydn's Symphony No. 82, as well as Mozart's Symphony No. 23, Piano Concerto in B-Flat (K. 456, with Garrick Ohlsson), and Violin Concerto No. 4 (K. 218, with Elmar Oliveira).... **NOTE:** In pre-concert recitals, beginning both nights at 7 and open to ticketholders, Messrs. Oliveira and Ohlsson will perform Beethoven's G-Major Violin Sonata (Op. 96).... ¶ July 20: The Emerson String Quartet plays quartets by Beethoven (Op. 59, No. 3) and Schubert (in A Minor, D. 804); André Previn joins members of the ensemble in Mozart's E-Flat-Major Piano Quartet.... **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders, the same musicians will perform Schubert's C-Minor "Quartettsatz" and Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet.... ¶ July 21-22: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Bach's First "Brandenburg" Concerto, as well as Mozart's Symphony No. 39, Cassation in B-Flat (K. 99), and C-Minor Piano Concerto (with André Watts).... **NOTE:** In pre-concert recitals, beginning both evenings at 7 and open to ticketholders, pianist Pedja Muzijevic will perform works by Galuppi and Chopin. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8.)

André-Michel Schub—The pianist will perform sonatas by Beethoven (in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2) and Grieg, as well as works by Debussy and Chopin. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. July 14 at 5:45.)

David Craighead and Marian Craighead—The husband-and-wife organists offer a duo-recital that includes music by Antonio Soler, Leo Sowerby, and Joseph Jongen. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. July 14 at 7. Admission by contribution.)... **NOTE:** Edward N. Nassor, carillonneur of the Netherlands Carillon in Arlington, Virginia, and of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., will perform a pre-concert carillon recital, audible to anyone in the vicinity, beginning at 6:30.

Bargemusic—Violinist Eriko Sato and pianist David Oei perform three movements from Britten's Suite (Op. 6); cellist Rafael Figueroa rounds out the ensemble for trios by Haydn and Mendelssohn. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. July 16-17 at 7:30 and July 19 at 4.)

Summergarden at MoMA—Two solo-instrument works by John Cage: "One^8," with cellist Michael Bach (who, for this piece, will be required to wield a specially constructed ultra-arched bow with a thumb lever to slacken the bow's horsehairs, enabling him to engage all four of the cello's strings at once); and "ASLSP" (short for "As Slow as Possible"), a collection of eight pieces, for which the performer—in this case, pianist Michael Torre—is instructed to pick one movement to omit and one to repeat. (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 17-18 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Junior Philharmonic of Tokyo—Naozumi Yamamoto conducts the youth orchestra in Weber's "Oberon" Overture, Beethoven's Symphony No. 2, Gershwin's "An American in Paris," and his own "The Glory of Sparkling Snow." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. July 17 at 8.)

Goldman Memorial Band—Gene Young conducts marches, show tunes, and light classics. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 17 and July 19 at 8.... ¶ Seaside Park, Brooklyn. July 18 at 8. No tickets necessary for any of these concerts.)

Concordia—Marin Alsop leads the chamber orchestra in selections from classic Broadway musicals. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. July 19 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Eileen Hunt—Organist, playing a twentieth-century program. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. July 21 at 7. Admission by contribution.)... **NOTE:** David Breneman, carillonneur of the Singing Tower (in Luray, Virginia), will perform a pre-concert carillon recital, beginning at 6:30.

Washington Square Festival Orchestra—Johannes Somary conducts Bach's First "Brandenburg" Concerto, Haydn's Symphony No. 48, a Vivaldi concerto, and (with a choir and soloists) Mozart's "Coronation" Mass (K. 317). (Washington Square Park. July 21 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—July 14 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts a student orchestra in Rossini's "Semiramide" Overture, Copland's "Appalachian Spring," and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 (featuring Alfred Brendel).... ¶ July 16 at 8:30: The Emerson String Quartet plays Beethoven's three "Razumovsky" Quartets (Op. 59).... ¶ July 17 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Beethoven's "Egmont" Overture and Piano Concertos No. 1 and No. 3 (with Alfred Brendel).... **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 6:30 and open to ticketholders, violinist Thomas Zehetmair and pianist Emanuel Ax perform Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 7 and (with the assistance of colleagues) the composer's own piano-quartet arrangement of his Quintet in E-Flat Major for Piano and Winds (Op. 16).... ¶ July 18 at 8:30: Roger Norrington conducts the Boston Symphony in Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 and Violin Concerto (with Mr. Zehetmair).... ¶ July 19 at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Beethoven's Piano Concertos No. 2 and No. 5, with Alfred Brendel as soloist.... ¶ July 21 at 8:30: John Williams conducts the Boston Pops in show and movie tunes.... ¶ July 22 at 8:30: Baritone Sanford Sylvan and pianist David Breitman perform Schubert's cycle "Die Schöne Müllerin." (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Rutgers SummerFest—July 15: A string quartet (plus clarinettist) from the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.... ¶ July 16: Latin American chamber music.... ¶ July 17: A brass quintet from the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.... ¶ July 18: Pianist Joshua Rifkin plays ragtimes and waltzes by Scott Joplin and tangos by the Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth.... ¶ July 19: A woodwind quintet from the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.... ¶ July 22: Born in Transylvania, in 1887, Nicolae Bretan established his reputation as an opera singer (a baritone) and stage director in his native Romania before gaining distinction as a composer. His half-dozen one-act operas, written in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, marked him as one of his country's most important composers. But he ran afoul of Romania's Communist regime, which banned his works and officially relegated him to the status of a non-person, ensuring that his death (which occurred in 1968) would be preceded by oblivion. Their fiat proved effective and enduring: you won't even find Bretan's name in the New Grove. But you *can* hear exceedingly rare performances of six of his lieder (to German texts by Heine and Lenau), performed here by tenor Frederick Urrey and pianist Martin Berkofsky (who will also offer Beethoven's cycle, "An die Ferne Geliebte"). Also on the program is Beethoven's F-Major Quartet (Op. 59, No. 1), played by the Amabile String Quartet.... **NOTE:** Mr. Berkofsky will play an all-Liszt pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders. (Nicholas Music Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Evenings at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-908 932-7511.)

Caramoor Music Festival—July 16 at 4:15: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble (plus colleagues) performs music by François Devienne, Dvořák, and Jeffrey Cotton.... ¶ July 17 at 8:30: Pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet performs Schumann's "Abegg Variations" and "Études Symphoniques," Ravel's "Miroirs," and several works by Debussy.... ¶ July 18 at 8:30: André Previn conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" Overture, Symphonies No. 1 and No. 39, and G-Major Piano Concerto (K. 453, with the conductor doubling as soloist).... ¶ July 19 at 5:30: Mr. Previn joins members of the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble to perform works by Rossini, Saint-Saëns, Poulenc, and Prokofiev. (Katonah, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-914 232-1252.)

Opera Festival of New Jersey—Final performances of the season. July 17 at 8: "The Merry Widow."... ¶ July 18 at 8: "Madame Butterfly." (Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N.J. For information about tickets, call 1-609 936-1500.)

Aston Magna Festival—The period-instrument festival, now in its twentieth season, presents an all-Mozart concert, featuring oboist Stephen Hammer, violinist Daniel Stepner, violist David Miller, and cellist Loretta O'Sullivan. The program includes the Divertimento for String Trio (K. 563), the Oboe Quartet, and arrangements for two treble instruments of arias from "Die Zauberflöte" (which, according to the much-debated claim of Mozart's publisher, were adapted by the composer himself). (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. July 17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 758-7425.... ¶ St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. July 18 at 6. For information about tickets, call 1-413 528-3595.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 17: Pianist Boris Berman and colleagues perform works by Debussy, Janáček, and Lukas Foss.... ¶ July 18: The Tokyo String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (in B-Flat, Op. 76, No. 4) and Schubert (his "Death and the Maiden"), and Ilana Vered joins them for Ezra Laderman's "Kreeger" Piano Quintet. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. Evenings at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 1-203 542-5537.)

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GLIMMERGLASS OPERA—**DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** in a production (with supertitles) by Martha Clarke, conducted by Richard Bradshaw. (July 13, July 15, and July 19, all at 2; and July 17 at 7:30.). . . **IL MATRIMONIO SEGRETO,** Cimarosa's rollicking comedy about eighteenth-century family values, in a production (with supertitles) by Jonathan Miller. (July 18 at 8 and July 20 at 2:30.) (Cooperstown, N. Y. For information about tickets, call 1-607 547-2255.)

WATERLOO FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA—Gerard Schwarz conducts David Diamond's "Aria and Hymn," Strauss's "Don Quixote" (featuring cellist Antonio Meneses), and Carlos Chávez's rarely performed Piano Concerto (with Grant Johannesen as soloist). (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. July 18 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 1-201 347-4700.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

RICHARD THOMPSON—His performance with David Byrne, a few months ago at St. Ann's, confirmed an open secret: this critic's darling definitely has the stuff to connect with an audience on several satisfying levels at once. Thompson's guitar playing is transporting, lovely, and sinewy, and as he picks, strums, thrashes, and thrums the strings, he bypasses all the usual obstacles between musical thought and deed. His compositions are mordant, empathic portraits of the odious and the piteous; they're sad, but full of life and wit. And, as a kind of bonus, it turns out that, between songs, Thompson is a highly comical Englishman: his dry, understated, and self-deprecating patter is hilarious. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 18 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

GUNS N' ROSES/METALLICA/FAITH NO MORE—Earthquake time out in the Meadowlands swamps. G N' R will do its big thing, and Metallica will do its Sherman-tank-with-wings thing, but perhaps the breakthrough set of this colossal metal bash will be the opening performance, by Faith No More, a Bay Area band that formed about ten years ago and has just released a magnificent, crunching, rap-funk-and-progressive-rock opus called "Angel Dust." It's a nasty piece of work in the best sense, by a band of self-described "objectionable people," who favor lyrics that evoke a seamy Diane Arbus–William Burroughs landscape of terror, and who possess the musical capacity to dramatize that terror in unexpected ways. Next time around, they may be on top of the bill. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. 1-201 935-3900. July 18 at 6:30.)

PAULA ABDUL—Between Maria of "West Side Story" and Madonna, the shadow falls. Following a shakedown tour last year, after the Gulf War, this choreographic morph is back on the road to perform a dozen virtual videos, assisted by dancing boy toys and material girls, and only mildly hampered by a squeaky-nasal voice that needs all the technical support it can get. Barring mechanical glitches, the MTV-primed audience will enjoy exactly what it came for, with flashdancing, color, and costumes substituting for quick-cut editing and closeup smiles. Opening is another video-friendly act, Color Me Badd, a quartet of doe-eyed crooners who have made the big leap from imitating a Levi's 501 doo-wop jingle in an Oklahoma City high-school talent show to selling four million copies of their début album, singing at the Grammy Awards for their idols Michael Bolton and Mariah Carey, and making a guest appearance on "Beverly Hills 90210." (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 17–18 at 8.)

Faith No More

JOHN MELLENCAMP—Jones Beach Theatre. July 13–15 at 8.

PATTI LABELLE—Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. July 15–17 at 8.

OZZY OSBOURNE—Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. July 16 at 7:30.

THOMAS MAPFUMO—With Les Têtes Brûlées. (Central Park SummerStage. July 19 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

GIPSY KINGS—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 21 at 8.

"JAZZ IN JULY"—Opening performances of the 92nd Street Y's eighth annual festival, which will run through July 30. July 21 at 8: Margaret Whiting and Walt Levinsky and the Great American Swing Band, featuring Dick Hyman. Jonathan Schwartz provides commentary. . . . ¶ July 22 at 8: Marian McPartland, Bill Charlap, Jay Leonhart, Dennis Macrell, and Mr. Hyman. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

YANKEES—Away until July 28, when they face the Baltimore Orioles.

METS—Vs. the San Francisco Giants, July 16-17 at 7:40, July 18 at 7:10, and July 19 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Dodgers, July 20-21 at 7:40 and July 22 at 1:40.
(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; and the Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

RACING

HORSES—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays, except Mondays and Thursdays, at 1:05. . . . At Atlantic City Race Course: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:25. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays at 8 and Tuesdays at 1; Sundays at 6:15. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE—For a broader view of Presidential campaigns than what you're reading in the papers, take a look at the exhibition at the New-York Historical Society called "Party Time: Presidential Campaigns Since 1832." Highlights include a Zachary Taylor bandanna, an Adlai Stevenson tie tack, and a George Bush bubble-gum cigar. Also on view at the museum (through July 19) is a first printing of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, given just several weeks before his death, in 1865. (170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 873-3400. The exhibition continues through Sept. 20.)

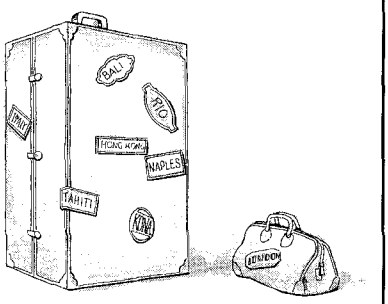
SWING DANCING—The people at Lincoln Center present evenings of dancing outdoors, by the fountain. July 15: Johnny Pacheco y Su Tumbao. . . . ¶ July 16: Samba Novo. . . . ¶ July 17: Rara Machine. . . . ¶ July 18: The Joe Carson big band. . . . ¶ July 22: The Bob January orchestra. (Evenings at 8:15. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, dance lessons are offered at 6:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5400.)

RICHARD PRICE and **ROBERT STONE**—The former will read from his new novel, "Clockers," and the latter will read from "Outerbridge Reach." (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 17 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

TOUR—A convention-minded event: a four-hour bus tour of historic sights, including the steps where George Washington delivered his first speech as President. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. (July 13-15 at 9 A.M. For reservations, call 439-1049.)

MEMORANDUM—The Democratic National Convention continues through July 16. For more information on convention events, call 290-1992.

QUEEN ELIZABETH 2
1993 WORLD CRUISES



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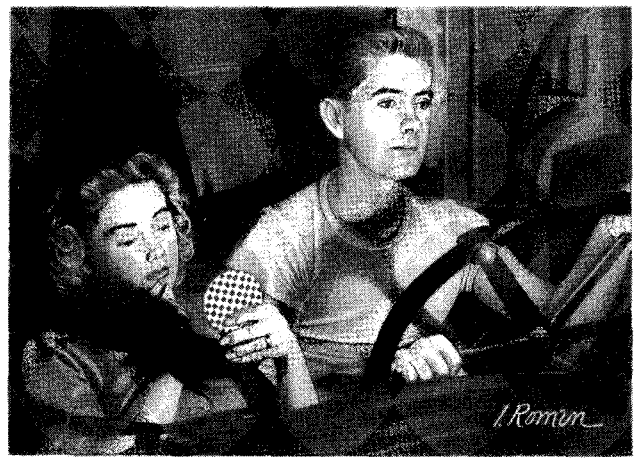
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 16.



At Film Forum 2, Joan Blondell and Tyrone Power in "Nightmare Alley"

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Monster in a Box" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mediterraneo" (directed by Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
Theatre 3: "Hear My Song" (†).
Theatre 4: "Zentropa" (Lars Von Trier, in English and German).
Theatre 5: "Night on Earth" (†).
Theatre 6: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through July 16: (Separate admissions) "Cousin Bobby" (†); and "Save and Protect" (1989, Alexander Sokurov; in Russian).
From July 17: (Separate admissions) "Cousin Bobby" (†); "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam), with Jonathan Pryce; and "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton), with Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, and Lillian Gish.

NEWMAN THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
July 13: Theatre closed.
July 14-16: "Le Notti Bianche" (1957, Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni; and "Ultrà" (1991, Ricky Tognazzi; in Italian).
July 17-19: "I Cento Cavalieri" (1964, Vittorio Cottafavi; in Italian), with Mark Damon; and "Domani Accadrà" (1988, Daniele Luchetti; in Italian).
July 20: Theatre closed.
From July 21: "Cronaca Familiare" (1962, Valerio Zurlini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni; and "Ragazzi Fuori" (1989, Marco Risi; in Italian).

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "Universal Soldier" (Roland Emmerich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren. From July 17: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier."
Theatre 3: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

LOEWS VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 2: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 3: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Best Intentions" (Bille August; in Swedish).
Theatre 5: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 6: "A League of Their Own" (†).
Theatre 7: "A League of Their Own" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE 12TH STREET, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge).

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet.
Theatre 2: "The Adjuster" (Atom Egoyan).
Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).
Theatre 4: Through July 16: "Shadows and Fog" (Woody Allen). From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.
Theatre 5: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: Through July 16: "Sister Act" (†). From July 17: "A Stranger Among Us" (Sidney Lumet), with Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 7: "Pinocchio" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE 3RD AVENUE, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"The Castle of Cagliostro" (Hayao Miyazaki), an animated film.

LOEWS 19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Universal Soldier" (Roland Emmerich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 3: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 4: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 5: "Universal Soldier."
Theatre 6: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Playboys" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "Sister Act" (†). From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis.
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 16: "Boomerang" (†). From July 17: "A Stranger Among Us" (Sidney Lumet), with Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Patriot Games" (†).

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (Roland Emmerich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren.
Theatre 3: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Housesitter" (†).

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Mambo Kings" (Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante and Antonio Banderas.

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "Pinocchio" (†). From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis.
Theatre 2: Through July 16: "The Adjuster" (Atom Egoyan). From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid."

CROWN GOTHAM, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Unlawful Entry" (†).

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Housesitter" (†).
Theatre 2: "Prelude to a Kiss" (Norman René), with Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan.

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "Sister Act" (†). From July 17: "A Stranger Among Us" (Sidney Lumet), with Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 2: "For Sasha" (Alexandre Arcady, in French).
Theatre 3: "The Playboys" (†).

ART EAST CINEMA, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
"Hear My Song" (†).

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci. From July 17: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 2: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 3: "Far and Away" (†).
Theatre 4: "Alien3" (David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.
Theatre 5: "The Waterdance" (†).
Theatre 6: "Basic Instinct" (†).

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (Roland Emmerich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren.

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Best Intentions" (Bille August; in Swedish).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).
Theatre 2: "Patriot Games" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Patriot Games" (†).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Housesitter" (†).
Theatre 2: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

LOEWS ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "Boomerang" (†). From July 17: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 2: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 3: "Universal Soldier" (Roland Emmerich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren.
Theatre 4: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 5: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).
Theatre 6: "Prelude to a Kiss" (Norman René), with Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 7: "Batman Returns" (†).

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Far and Away" (†). From July 17: "A Stranger Among Us" (Sidney Lumet), with Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 2: Through July 16: "Sister Act" (†). From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through July 14: "Blast 'Em" (directed by Joseph Blasioli), a documentary. From July 15: "Echoes from a Somber Empire" (1990, Werner Herzog; in French and English), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through July 16: "Wisecracks" (Gail Singer), a documentary. From July 17: "One False Move" (Carl Franklin), with Bill Paxton, Cynda Williams, Billy Bob Thornton, and Michael Beach.

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Prelude to a Kiss" (Norman René), with Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 2: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "The Waterdance" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pepi, Luci, Bom" (1980, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish).
Theatre 3: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).
Theatre 4: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 2: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 16: "Sister Act" (†). From July 17: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 4: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

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Theatre 5: "A League of Their Own" (†).
Theatre 6: "Prelude to a Kiss" (Norman René), with Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 7: Through July 16: "Batman Returns" (†). From July 17: "A Stranger Among Us" (Sidney Lumet), with Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 8: "Unlawful Entry" (†).
Theatre 9: Through July 16: "A League of Their Own" (†). From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 2: "Housesitter" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Far and Away" (†).

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through July 16: "Pinocchio" (†).
From July 17: "A Stranger Among Us" (Sidney Lumet), with Melanie Griffith.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Far and Away" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Playboys" (†).
Theatre 3: "Housesitter" (†).
Theatre 4: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 5: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "The Player" (†).

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

LOEWS FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Basic Instinct" (†).

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Zentropa" (Lars Von Trier, in English and German).

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Prelude to a Kiss" (Norman René), with Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 2: "Night on Earth" (†).

LOEWS FINE ARTS, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (†).

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse).

LOEWS COLUMBUS CIRCLE, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through July 16: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
From July 17: "A Stranger Among Us" (Sidney Lumet), with Melanie Griffith.

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

LINCOLN PLAZA 1, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese). From July 17: "A Tale of Springtime" (Eric Rohmer, in French).
Theatre 2: "The Hairdresser's Husband" (Patrice Leconte, in French).
Theatre 3: "The Player" (†).

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Unlawful Entry" (†).

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).
Theatre 2: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 3: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 4: Through July 16: "Sister Act" (†). From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis.
Theatre 5: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 6: "Universal Soldier" (Roland Emmerich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren.

METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through July 16: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†). From July 17: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 2: "Housesitter" (†).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Far and Away" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Alien^3" (directed by David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (Roland Emmerich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren.
Theatre 3: Through July 16: "Basic Instinct" (†). From July 17: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 4: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 5: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 6: "Universal Soldier."
Theatre 7: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).

EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through July 16: "Sister Act" (†).
From July 17: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 16: "Boomerang" (†). From July 17: "Sister Act" (†).

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Unlawful Entry" (†).
Theatre 2: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

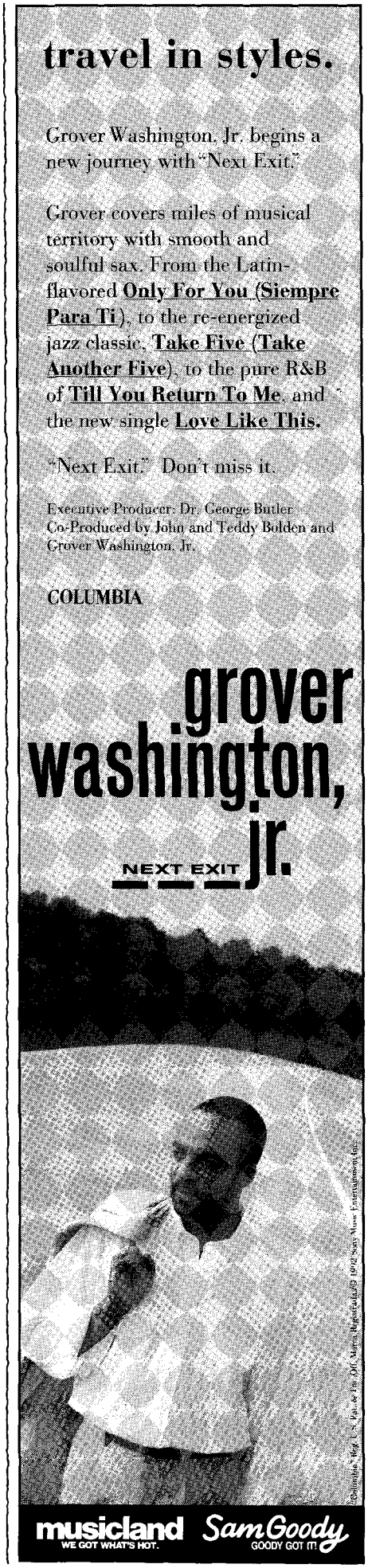
REVIVAL HOUSES

LE CINEMATOGRAPHE, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)
Through July 14: "The Lineup" (1958, directed by Donald Siegel), with Eli Wallach, Robert Keigh, and Warner Anderson; and "Murder by Contract" (1958, Irving Lerner), with Vince Edwards.
July 15-16: "The Crimson Kimono" (1959, Samuel Fuller), with Victoria Shaw, Glenn Corbett, and James Shigeta; and "Underworld, U.S.A." (1961, Fuller), with Cliff Robertson, Dolores Dorn, and Beatrice Kay.
From July 17: "Blast of Silence" (1961, Allen Baron), with Baron, Molly McCarthy, and Larry Tucker.

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through July 14: "The Man Who Would Be King" (1975, John Huston), with Sean Connery, Michael Caine, and Christopher Plummer; and "Black Robe" (Bruce Beresford), with Lothaire Bluteau.
July 15-16: "The Tingler" (1960, William Castle), with Vincent Price and Judith Evelyn; and "Homicidal" (1961, Castle), with Glenn Corbett.
July 17-18: "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (1972, Luis Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Stéphane Audran, and Delphine Seyrig; and "My Dinner with André" (†).
July 19-21: "The Wild Bunch" (1969, Sam Peckinpah), with William Holden, Ernest Borgnine, and Robert Ryan; and "McCabe & Mrs. Miller" (1971, Robert Altman), with Warren Beatty and Julie Christie.
From July 22: "The World's Best Commercials: Cannes 1991."

FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
July 14-15: "Desperate" (1947, Anthony Mann), with Steve Brodie, Audrey Long, and Raymond Burr; "Raw Deal" (1948, Mann), with Dennis O'Keefe, Claire Trevor, and Marsha Hunt; and "Railroaded" (1947, Mann), with John Ireland, Sheila Ryan, and Hugh Beaumont.
July 16: "Phantom Lady" (†); and "Fear in the Night" (1947, Macwell Shane), with DeForest Kelly.
July 17-18: "Out of the Past" (1947, Jacques Tourneur), with Jane Greer, Robert Mitchum, Kirk Douglas, and Rhonda Fleming; and "Nightmare Alley" (1947, Edmund Goulding), with Tyrone Power, Joan Blondell, and Coleen Gray.
July 19-20: "Sudden Fear" (1952, David Miller), with Joan Crawford, Jack Palance, and Gloria Grahame; and "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948, Anatole Litvak), with Barbara Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster.
July 21-22: "The Set-Up" (see page 17); and "The Enforcer" (†).

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 14: "The King of Marvin Gardens" (1972, Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson, Bruce Dern, and Ellen Burstyn; and "Head" (1968, Rafelson), with the Monkees.
July 15: "Murder, My Sweet" (1945, Edward Dmytryk), with Claire Trevor, Dick Powell, Mike Mazurki, and Anne Shirley; and "The Brasher Doubloon" (1947, John Brahm), with George Montgomery.
July 16: "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (1958, Richard Brooks), with Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, Burl Ives, Judith Anderson, Madeleine Sherwood, and Jack Carson; and "The Night of the Iguana" (1964, John Huston), with Richard Burton, Ava Gardner, Deborah Kerr, and Sue Lyon.
July 17-18: "The Last Metro" (1981, François Truffaut; in French), with Catherine Deneuve, Gérard Depardieu, and Jean Poiret; and "Love on the Run" (1979, Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Marie-France Pisier, and Claude Jade.
July 19: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" (1967, David Swift), with Robert Morse, Michele Lee, and Rudy Vallée; and "The Producers" (1968, Mel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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Brooks), with Zero Mostel, Dick Shawn, and Gene Wilder.

July 20: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada; and "Muriel" (1963, Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.

July 21: "Ministry of Fear" (1944, Fritz Lang), with Ray Milland, Marjorie Reynolds, and Dan Duryea; and "The Fallen Idol" (1948, Carol Reed), with Bobby Henrey, Ralph Richardson, and Michèle Morgan.

July 22: "Sudden Fear" (1952, David Miller), with Joan Crawford, Jack Palance, and Gloria Grahame; and "Harriet Craig" (1950, Vincent Sherman), with Crawford and Wendell Corey.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—July 13 at 2:30 and July 14 at 6: "Yol" (1982, directed by Yilmaz Güney; in Turkish).... ¶ July 13 at 3: "The Ascent" (1977, Larisa Shepitko; in Russian).... ¶ July 13 at 6 and July 14 at 2:30: "Man of Marble" (1977, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish).... ¶ July 13 at 6: "My Friend Ivan Lapshin" (1982, Aleksei Gherman; in Russian).... ¶ July 14 at 3 and July 16 at 6: "The Asthenic Syndrome" (1989, Kira Muratova; in Russian).... ¶ July 14 at 6: "The Seasons" (1975, Arthur Peleshian) and "Chernobyl: Chronicle of Difficult Weeks" (1987, Vladimir Shevchenko), both documentaries.... ¶ July 16 at 2:30 and July 20 at noon: "Z" (1969, Costa-Gavras; in French), with Yves Montand, Irene Papas, and Jean-Louis Trintignant.... ¶ July 16 at 3: "Final Verdict" (1987, Herz Frank; in Russian).... ¶ July 16 at 6 and July 18 at 2:30: "Rodrigo D: No Future" (1988, Victor Manuel Gaviria; in Spanish).... ¶ July 17 at 2:30 and July 19 at 5: "Solaris" (1972, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian).... ¶ July 17 at 6 and July 18 at 2: "Twenty Days Without War" (1976, Alexei Gherman; in Russian).... ¶ July 18 at noon: "Stranger Than Paradise" (1984, Jim Jarmusch).... ¶ July 18 at 4:30 and July 19 at 12:30: "Siberiade" (1982, Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky; in Russian).... ¶ July 20 at 2:30: "Manhattan" (1979, Woody Allen), with Allen.... ¶ July 20 at 6 and July 21 at noon: "An Unfinished Piece for Player Piano" (1977, Nikita Mikhalkov; in Russian).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—July 13-14 at 2 and 7:30: "Eijanaika" (1981, Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).... ¶ July 13-14 at 4:45: "Intentions of Murder" (1968, Imamura; in Japanese).... ¶ July 15 at 2, July 16 at 6:30 and July 20 at 2: "Kukurantumi" (1983, King Ampaw).... ¶ July 15 at 4, July 16 at 8:25, and July 20 at 4: "Boseman and Lena" (1972, Ross Devenish).... ¶ July 15 at 6 and July 16 at 2: "Sea of Roses" (1977, Ana Carolina).... ¶ July 15 at 8:30 and July 16 at 4:30: "Ladies on the Rocks" (1983, Christian Braad Thomsen).... ¶ July 17 at 2, July 18 at 6, and July 19 at 2: "Black God, White Devil" (1963, Glauber Rocha; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).... ¶ July 17 at 4:15, July 18 at 8:15, and July 19 at 4:15: "The Road Warrior" (1982, George Miller), with Mel Gibson.... ¶ July 17 at 6:30, July 18 at 2, and July 19 at 6:30: "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975, Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones), with Graham Chapman.... ¶ July 17 at 8:15, July 18 at 3:45, and July 19 at 8:15: "The Canterbury Tales" (1972, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian).... ¶ July 20 at 6, July 21 at 2, and July 22 at 6:15: "Voyage en Douce" (1979, Michel Deville; in French), with Dominique Sanda and Geraldine Chaplin.... ¶ July 20 at 8:15, July 21 at 4:15, and July 22 at 8:30: "Going Places" (1974, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Miou-Miou, and Patrick Dewaere.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—July 17 at 3 and 7: "Gallipoli" (1981, Peter Weir), with Mel Gibson, Mark Lee, and Bill Kerr.... ¶ July 18 at 3 and 7: "Babette's Feast" (1988, Gabriel Axel; in Danish and French), with Stéphane Audran.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdan Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—July 15 at 8: "The Three Ages" (1923, Buster Keaton; silent), with Keaton, Margaret Leahy, Wallace Beery, and Joe Roberts.... ¶ July 22 at 8: "The Merry Widow" (1925, Erich von Stroheim; silent), with Mae Murray and John Gilbert. (Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.)

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—July 16 ay 7: "Ju Dou" (1991, Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).... ¶ July 16 at 9: "Life on a String" (1992, Chen Kaige; in Chinese).... ¶ July 17 at 6 and 9:15: "Fitzcarraldo" (1982, Werner Herzog; in German), with Klaus Kinski and Claudia Cardinale.... ¶ July 18 at 3: "The Red Balloon" (1956, Albert Lamorisse; a French film without dialogue).... ¶ July 18 at 4: "Mon Oncle" (†).... ¶ July 18 at 6:30: "Small Change" (1976, François Truffaut; in French).... ¶ July 18 at 8:30: "The Wild Child" (1970, Truffaut; in French).... ¶ July 19 at 4: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriel Ferzetti, and Léa Massari.... ¶ July 19 at 6:45: "Il Grido" (†).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Basic Instinct—A vicious, grindingly manipulative urban mystery that uses a thick atmosphere of S & M kinkiness to distract the audience from the story's thinness and inanity. Michael Douglas plays a cop with a "dark side." Sharon Stone plays a rich, beautiful bisexual novelist who is the prime suspect in a murder case. He falls in love with her, and the two of them breathe heavily through the rest of the picture. Stone has a few bright moments early on. But our basic instinct as we watch Douglas's strenuous grimaces of sexual transport is to flee the theatre. And the mystery is so ineptly constructed that it's not much fun trying to work out the solution. We sense that the screenwriter, Joe Eszterhas, and the director, Paul Verhoeven, don't have any respect for the genre—that they're too jaded to care about anything but giving us enough voyeuristic jolts to keep us awake. When the picture is over, we realize that the only suspense that it has produced effectively is a weird kind of ideological suspense. Will the movie take its smarmy misogyny all the way, or will it pull back in the end? It goes all the way. Also with George Dzundza and Jeanne Tripplehorn; there's a very peculiar cameo by Dorothy Malone.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/6/92.) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Loews Festival, and Olympia.... ¶ Criterion Center; through July 16.)

Batman Returns—Tim Burton's sequel to his phenomenally successful 1989 "Batman" doesn't try to top the first picture, either with splashier special effects or with loftier pretensions to significance; nor does it simply go through the motions, repeating the surefire stuff with a self-satisfied air of professionalism. It's a blend of playful novelty and reassuring familiarity—a difficult mixture to get right. This time, the hero (again Michael Keaton) does battle with a greedy businessman named Max Shreck (Christopher Walken) and the roly-poly arch-criminal known as the Penguin (Danny DeVito). And whenever Batman ventures out on one of his nocturnal crime-fighting missions, he runs into a mysterious woman who dresses like a cat and carries a whip. The hilariously twisted relationship between the hero and the Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) plays like

Ellen Barkin and Jack Nicholson in "Man Trouble"

an apache dance in animal costumes, and it's the glory of the movie. The cat clothes seem to release something strange and wild in Pfeiffer: her performance is ferociously sexy and uninhibitedly, over-the-top funny. As in the first movie, Burton gives the material a luxurious masked-ball quality and a sly contemporary wit without violating the myth's low, cheesy comic-book origins. He's an artist who's comfortable with both the higher aspirations and the lower instincts of his nature as an entertainer: he and Batman are an ideal match. Also with Michael Gough, Michael Murphy, Pat Hingle, and, in a cameo, Paul Reubens (better known as Pee-wee Herman). Screenplay by Daniel Waters; cinematography by Stefan Czapsky; score by Danny Elfman; production design by Bo Welch.—T.R. (6/29/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Boomerang—Set in a world where entire upscale companies are run by African-Americans, this Eddie Murphy vehicle tries hard to be positive. It's a pity that the movie isn't any good. Murphy is a Manhattan marketing hot shot and ladies' man who ends up working under the woman of his dreams (Robin Givens) when their cosmetics firms merge. She treats him as cavalierly as he treated the previous women in his life; the script hands out one earnest lesson after another, so that he can learn what it feels like to be used. Givens knows how to employ her flashing eyes and chiselled, haughty features for comic effect, but she doesn't get a single clever line. As the gal who strives to save the hero, Halle Berry is so much more accessible than Givens, while being equally pretty, that dramatically there's no contest. Murphy has a couple of peppy scenes with David Alan Grier and Martin Lawrence, who play his best buddies, but a lot of the time he acts unconvincingly modest. The screenplay (by Barry W. Blaustein and David Sheffield), with its constant references to Murphy's sexual magnetism, does all the bragging for him. Padded with manic interludes involving Eartha Kitt, Geoffrey Holder, and Grace Jones; directed by Reginald Hudlin.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Cousin Bobby—Jo nathan Demme's film about his cousin Robert Castle, an Episcopal pastor who works in Harlem, has a loose, friendly home-movie quality that's weird but appealing. Bobby is a chunky, balding, sixtyish priest who leads his poor parishioners on protest marches, delivers fiery speeches on the evils of racism, and generally stirs things up on behalf of the disadvantaged, the neglected, and the oppressed. Demme's offhand approach draws us into an unusual kind of intimacy with Bobby and the ravaged urban world he lives in. The movie is a brilliantly original portrait of a complex personality: it does justice to both the continuities and the discontinuities of its subject's life story. Demme, who is onscreen a fair amount, acts as a genial, low-pressure host; his manner is an invitation to the audience to join in the family feeling that's growing between him and his cousin. The film ends up being a

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lovely, amiably persuasive demonstration of the personal sources of political conviction.—T.R. (6/1/92) (Little Theatre.)

The Enforcer (1950)—This crime melodrama, inspired by newspaper accounts of the organization of killers-for-hire known as Murder, Inc., has a good, tense opening sequence, set at night, with Humphrey Bogart as a D.A. trying to protect the gangster (Ted de Corsia) who is scheduled to be his witness in the morning. But as the D.A. goes back over the case, in flashback, the suspense gradually seeps away. The narrative keeps moving along, but it doesn't build and the flashbacks aren't ingeniously pieced together—they're not fun. Bogart, who seems to be the police investigator as well as the prosecutor, walks through his colorless part; he's far less entertaining than the hoods—a collection of brutish misfits who pick on each other. De Corsia, with his sinister accent and his humorlessness and impersonal anger, takes over as the star. Others in the cast include Zero Mostel as Big Babe, Lawrence (later Michael) Tolan as Duke, Don Beddoe as O'Hara, who's sodden on muscatel, and Jack Lambert, Robert Steele, John Kellogg, King Donovan, Roy Roberts, Tito Vuolo, and Mario Siletti; despite the crude writing (the script is by Martin Rackin) each of these men makes a distinct impression. Only Everett Sloane as the mastermind, Mendoza, is a disappointment—he's smoothly actorish and outclasses his amoral-killer role. The women (Adelaide Klein, Pat Joiner, and Susan Cabot) are treated negligently, as mere accessories to the story. The film is well shot (by Robert Burks) and astutely designed, though it seems to have been made on the cheap; there's almost no one on the screen who isn't directly related to the case. A puzzling omission: we never learn how Murder, Inc., actually worked; how did potential customers find out how to get in touch with the murder ring? Directed by Bretaigne Windust.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 21-22.)

Far and Away—Despite all the publicity about the film's physical grandeur and the Gaelic heritage of the director, Ron Howard, this historical fantasy, set in the early eighteen-nineties, centers on the spectacle of the real-life spouses Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise enacting a coltish courtship. She's headstrong Shannon Christie, the only child of a wealthy Irish landowner (Robert Prosky) and a suffocatingly proper mother (Barbara Babcock). He's rebellious Joseph Donelly, a tenant farmer's son who botches an attempt to kill Shannon's father. You may be willing to accept the broad farce and melodrama for the sake of the scenery, shot in an imposing new Panavision Super 70 process. But Cruise and Kidman are a couple of kids playing "Let's pretend." When they reach the United States, you keep waiting for them to light out for the territories. They're stranded in Boston, where she plucks chickens, he becomes a bare-knuckled boxer, and Howard exposes the backside of the American Dream and of America's favorite young star. The director stages the climactic Oklahoma land rush with aplomb, but by then the audience has ceased to care. Mikael Salomon earns his credit for the cinematography; Bob Dolman wrote the script from a story he concocted with Howard.—M.S. (6/1/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia. Evenings only. . . . ¶ 86th St. East Twin; through July 16, evenings only.)

Il Grido (1957)—Just before his international breakthrough with "L'Avventura," Antonioni made this flawed yet affecting, mournful, wintry film about the neurotic apathy of a working-class man. It's poetic without being believable. The American actor Steve Cochran plays Aldo, a skilled worker in a sugar refinery; when the woman he has been living with (Alida Valli) no longer wants him, he falls into a numb despair and wanders around with his small daughter. He meets other women, but they don't make enough impression on him for him to get a grip on life. Without the moneyed decadence of the characters in Antonioni's later films, the atmospheric gloom seems less chic, more purely depressive. Set in the muddy Po Valley. With Betsy Blair, Dorian Gray, and Lyn Shaw. In Italian.—P.K. (Symphony Space; July 19.)

Hear My Song—In this small-scale comedy, Peter Chelsom, a first-time director, takes a whimsical conceit and sells it so hard that it loses most of its fragile charm. Micky O'Neill (played by Adrian Dunbar, who co-wrote the screenplay with Chelsom) manages a Liverpool music hall that caters to the local Irish community; the movie is about his attempt to find a legendary Irish tenor named Josef Locke, who hasn't been heard from in thirty years. Micky goes to Ireland to persuade Locke to return to England for a concert; on the home soil, the hero finds himself in a realm of ancient eccentricity and unearthly light, and the movie finds itself in Bill Forsyth territory. Chelsom tries, too strenuously, to evoke the enchanted comic tone of "Local Hero," and Dunbar seems to punctuate every gag with a roguish smile. The relentless quirkiness is annoying, but the story is, on its own terms, well constructed, and the filmmakers take their fey, sentimental humor right to the limit: you can't say that they don't have the courage of their elfinness. And when Ned Beatty, who plays Locke, is on the screen the picture is nearly as transporting as it's intended to be. His performance is large-spirited comic acting: a pure specimen of Celtic soulfulness, the magical substance that everyone else in the movie has been trying to produce synthetically. Also with Shirley Anne Field.—T.R. (3/9/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Art East Cinema.)

Housesitter—A smug, lame comedy, directed by Frank Oz from a script by Mark Stein (and a story by Stein and the producer, Brian Grazer). Goldie Hawn plays a free spirit named Gwen, who takes charge of a floundering Boston architect named Newton Davis (Steve Martin). Gwen is an accomplished liar, and Hawn spins her biggest whoppers with sweeping confidence. Hawn keeps the audience on Gwen's side even when she commandeers a dream house that Newton intended for his childhood sweetheart, Becky (Dana Delany), and poses as Newton's wife. Gwen has genuine screwball potential—too bad it goes totally unrealized. She falls hard for Newton's idyllic home town, Dobbs Mill, in all its Colonial glory. This movie isn't anarchically egalitarian, like the great screwball comedies; it's upwardly mobile. Martin hasn't lost his timing or slapstick grace, but his inspiration is at low ebb. Peter MacNicol fashions his own pocket of furtive craziness, and Christopher Durang contributes a bright, subversive cameo. But the rest of the film is reflexively conventional. It's no more than a little white lie—very little and very white.—M.S. (6/29/92) (34th St. East, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Howards End—James Ivory's movie version of the 1910 E. M. Forster novel is a handsome and intelligent piece of work: a faithful, well-paced, and carefully crafted dramatization of a very good story. The heroine, Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), is a thirtyish Englishwoman of German ancestry who lives with her sister and her brother in a London town house. The plot brings the cultured and rather high-minded Schlegels in contact with a very different sort of family, the Wilcoxes, who appear to represent English values at their most infuriatingly solid and complacent. The emotional core of the movie is the brief, unlikely friendship that develops between Margaret and conservative Ruth Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave), a woman who inhabits a narrow world so profoundly, and with such enormous feeling, that she transforms it. Redgrave is at her most radiant in this role. And Thompson, whose character is meant to be seen as the heir to Mrs. Wilcox's thoroughly English kind of spirituality, comes through with a thrilling, original performance; she carries the movie. These luminous performances go a long way toward putting Forster's ambitious ideas across on the screen. (Anthony Hopkins, as the no-nonsense businessman Henry Wilcox, is awfully good, too.) The story holds us for the full two hours and twenty minutes that the movie takes to tell it; Ivory and his screenwriter, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, have done a skillful and sensitive job of adaptation. All that's missing, really, is the elusive quality that makes Forster such a brave, moving writer: his constant striving to see beyond the story, to see through it, to transcend it. Also with Helena Bonham Carter, Samuel West, James Wilby, Nicola Duffett, Prunella Scales, and Adrian Ross Magenty.—T.R. (5/4/92) (Loews Fine Arts.)

A League of Their Own—Penny Marshall's fictional account of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League has no mind of its own. Marshall directed it with both eyes on the audience. She and the screenwriting team of Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel slap together a bare-bones narrative (about the league's 1943 début season) and dress it up with set-piece gags and sentimental ploys. All they want is for people to come out saying that they laughed and they cried. The lead characters are Dottie Hinson (Geena Davis) and her kid sister, Kit Keller (Lori Petty), who catch and pitch, respectively, for the Rockford Peaches and act out their sibling tensions on the baseball diamond and in the locker room. Tom Hanks mugs ingratiatingly as Jimmy Dugan, the Rockford coach and an alcoholic former slugger, and Madonna sashays through the supporting role of All the Way Mae, a ballplayer who tests the league's deportment code. This movie aims for the tear ducts and the funny bone as ruthlessly as the summer's big action-fantasy hits go after the viscera. It unfolds in field-of-dreams land—complete with cornstalks.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Bay Cinema, Loews Tower East, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Lethal Weapon 3—When that manic L.A.P.D. detective Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson) visits the home of rough-and-ready L.A.D. cop Lorna Cole (Rene Russo), he notices that her personal computer contains Three Stooges software. Moe, Larry, and Curly, who showed

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Robert Ryan, who boxed from boyhood and was a heavyweight champion at Dartmouth, made the most of an opportunity to bring his acting and athletic skills together in the stirring cult movie "The Set-Up" (playing July 21-22, at Film Forum 2). This 1949 ringside morality play, directed by Robert Wise and written by Art Cohn (from a verse narrative by Joseph Moncure March), stars Ryan as Stoker Thompson, a declining thirty-five-year-old puncher unwilling to give up the sport until he can buy a stake in an up-and-comer and devote the rest of his years to managing. On a night when Stoker feels he's going to beat a young, highly touted scrapper, his wife (Audrey Totter) decides she can no longer endure the fight game—and he discovers, mid-match, that his manager (George Tobias) has promised a racketeer that Stoker will take a dive. In its stark depiction of rough-hewn integrity pitted against easy money, and its stylized evocation of the athletes' pipe dreams (the bout is staged in a town called Paradise City), "The Set-Up" epitomizes the poetic boxing movies that followed Clifford Odets' "Golden Boy." It's more painstaking than inspired. But the craftsmanship in this low-budget production is economical in every sense (the action unfolds in seventy-two minutes of "real time"), and Wise showcases the performers beautifully—especially Ryan, whose physical eloquence carries the film. Wise and Ryan make Stoker's reactions to the other boxers reveal the hero's own hopes and ambitions. In the ring, Ryan's hunched, stalking style achieves a dogged power. And the actor fills the tragic post-fight finale with a racking tension. Ryan conveys the fury and despair of a man stripped of illusion and terrified of the reality he sees.

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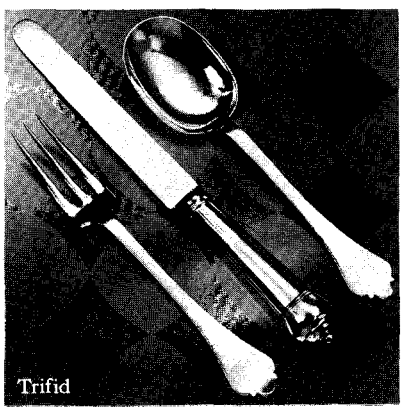

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

up in a film clip in "LW2," have become the guiding spirits of the series. The director, Richard Donner, and the screenwriters, Jeffrey Boam and Robert Mark Kamen, are too proud of their hit formula. They keep restating it: Cole describes the career of Riggs and his staid partner, Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover), as a combination of "*The Police Gazette* and *Mad* magazine." Topically enough, the villain is a sadistic, corrupt ex-cop (played by Stuart Wilson). But all Donner and company deliver is their usual quasi-comic "chaos and mayhem." Joe Pesci surfaces again as Valley-speaking fixer Leo Getz, presumably to prove that the more stooges the merrier. But the central gag goes unstated. Riggs and Murtaugh are supposed to be effective. The "Lethal Weapon" movies put Keystone Kops on the Thin Blue Line and ask us to cheer them toward victory.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, 59th Street East Cinema, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through July 16.)

Mon Oncle (1959)—One often appreciates what Jacques Tati is trying to do more than what he actually brings off. His target is the depersonalization of modern life—not so much the mechanization that René Clair satirized in "A Nous la Liberté" and Chaplin in "Modern Times," but the sterile, tasteless tedium that modern hygienic design has produced. There are genuinely inventive moments: the little boys gambling on whether passersby will fall into their lamppost trap; the old man directing a chauffeur who is trying to park an inordinately long car; the willful garage doors; the wonderful use of the modern functional house as a cartooned face, so that heads at the circular windows become eyes looking out. But the moments are intermittent, and a fundamental miscasting confuses the issue: shouldn't the unemotional, gawky, butterfingered Tati be playing the plastics manufacturer rather than the warm, friendly uncle? With Jean-Pierre Zola, Lucien Frégis, and Alain Bécourt. In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; July 18.)

Monster in a Box—Spalding Gray's latest filmed monologue details his effort to complete an autobiographical first novel, a nineteen-hundred-page monster about a man whose mother commits suicide while he's on vacation. Gray saves most of the family drama for the book. (In fact, it's just been published under the title "Impossible Vacation," at a mere two hundred and twenty-eight pages.) The performance piece simply chronicles what he did when he experienced non-writer's block. The comedic high point is his trip to an American-film festival in the Soviet Union; the low point is a panic over AIDS. It's an unearned "8½." Gray's manner of recitation is too broad and insistent here, and much of the material is warmed over. Directed by Nick Broomfield.—M.S. (6/29/92) (Angelika Film Center.)

My Dinner with André (1981)—It's like a mad tea party or a mad, modern Platonic dialogue about the meaning of life. Self-effacingly directed, by Louis Malle, it flows smoothly, creating the illusion that we are simply listening in on the dinnertime conversation of the playwright Wallace Shawn and the former avant-garde theatre director André Gregory. The premise of the movie is that they haven't seen each other since 1975, when André dropped out—took off on a spiritual quest for "reality," which led him around the world. (Actually, they taped their conversations two or three times a week for three months, and then Shawn worked for a year shaping the material into a script, in which they play comic distillations of aspects of themselves.) Wally persuades André to tell him what he has been up to, and the suave, hawklike André, who's like the sum of all the crackpot glittery-eyed charmers in the world, pours out the record of his transcendental experiences. He keeps going, in wave after impassioned wave, describing astonishing, preposterous adventures in the Polish forests, in Scotland, in India and Tibet and in the Sahara, and even in Montauk, where he was buried alive in a death-and-rebirth ceremony. What he acts out for us is the questing that has torn so much of the modern theatre apart, when the men and women of the theatre became dissatisfied with the limits of stage performance and began to delve into para-theatrical cults. Wally, the pragmatist and sensualist, throws in an occasional skeptical dart, and then, when he begins to talk, he plays warthog to André's soaring flights of mysticism and offers the grubbiest of small comforts as proof of the fullness of his life. The two are perfect foils. This is a bizarre and surprisingly entertaining satirical comedy—the story of the search beyond theatre turned into theatre, or, at least, into a movie.—P.K. (8th St. Playhouse; July 17-18.)

Night on Earth—This anthology film, written and directed by Jim Jarmusch ("Stranger Than Paradise"), has a gimmicky premise. Each of its five stories takes place in a different city, and each is about a taxicab ride. All the trips are going on at the same time, but in different time zones, so there's an illusion of temporal progress: the picture begins at sunset in Los Angeles and ends at dawn in Helsinki. (The intervening episodes take place in New York, Paris, and Rome.) It's a feeble but serviceable conceit; if the sketches were funny, we'd barely notice the preciousness of the structure. Unfortunately, the material is very thin, and the movie doesn't vary its style from sketch to sketch: Jarmusch sticks doggedly to his trademark deadpan manner. The comedian Roberto Benigni, playing a motor-mouth cabbie in the Italian episode, briefly enlivens the picture with a riotous erotic monologue. But, for the most part, the movie induces in the viewer an eerie, suspended feeling that mimics the time-stands-still monotony of a long airplane journey. It tries for a chipper, lighthearted tone, but it gives the audience a gruelling flight—a red-eye to nowhere. Also with Winona Ryder, Gena Rowlands, Giancarlo Esposito, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Rosie Perez, Isaach de Bankolé, Béatrice Dalle, and Matti Pellonpää. In English, French, Italian, and Finnish.—T.R. (5/18/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Patriot Games—Phillip Noyce's film, adapted from one of Tom Clancy's jillion-selling suspense novels, is a much more effective thriller than it has any right to be. The screenwriters, W. Peter Iliff and Donald Stewart, have eliminated much of the novel's hot air without entirely knocking the wind out of the material; the script tones down Clancy's right-wing ideology and gives the story some straightforward action-movie narrative drive. The plot, which pits Irish terrorists against an Annapolis history professor and sometime C.I.A. analyst named Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford), is ridiculous, boys'-adventure stuff, but the filmmakers almost put it across. Noyce handles the action sequences beautifully: they're lucid and exciting, and their construction has a kind of formal elegance that's oddly satisfying. (He's less successful with the scenes of the Ryan family's domestic bliss, which are meant to establish Jack's credentials as a champion of traditional values.) Ford brings a welcome trace of ambivalence to his character's heroics—a sense that Ryan isn't altogether proud of the lethal efficiency he displays when's he's drawn into combat. Sean Bean, Richard Harris, and (especially) James Fox do nice work in supporting roles. This is an expert, entertaining genre picture. Noyce and his team serve Clancy's crude material well—too well, probably. Also with Anne Archer (who's awful), Thora Birch, James Earl Jones, Samuel L. Jackson, and Patrick Bergin. Cinematography by Donald McAlpine.—T.R. (6/15/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews New York Twin, U. A. East, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Phantom Lady (1944)—The mood and pacing lift this low-budget thriller out of its class, but the ideas, the dialogue, and the ending that the studio insisted on prevent it from being a first-rate B-picture. Ella Raines is the girl in danger, Franchot Tone is the psychopathic killer, Alan Curtis is the man wrongly convicted of murder, Thomas Gomez is the police inspector, and Elisha Cook, Jr., is the drummer in the jam session that is the film's high point of excitement. Robert Siodmak directed, and the producer was Joan Harrison, who had worked as an assistant to Hitchcock. From a William Irish novel, adapted by Bernard C. Schoenfeld; with Fay Helm, Regis Toomey, Virginia Brissac, and Doris Lloyd. (The drumming was actually done by Dave Coleman.)—P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 16.)

Pinocchio (1940)—Disney's best feature cartoon—an elating, sometimes terrifying musical adventure. A good fairy grants woodcarver Geppetto's wish that his puppet

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Pinocchio were his real son—on condition that the marionette first learn right from wrong. (His nose sprouts like Jack's beanstalk when he tells a lie.) Jiminy Cricket made his infectiously funny début as Pinocchio's conscience. Disney's humane take on Carlo Collodi's imaginative but flinty book is inspiring for children and primally nostalgic for adults. The animation is as fecund and economical as great silent slapstick; the most ingenious bits of business pop like cap pistols. You come out savoring the visual beauty and invention, the narrative zing, and the catchy tunes (by Leigh Harline and Ned Washington), which include "Hi Diddle Dee Dee (An Actor's Life for Me)," "I've Got No Strings," and "When You Wish Upon a Star." Ben Sharpsteen and Hamilton Luske were the supervising directors; seven writers did the adaptation. With the voices of Dickie Jones (Pinocchio), Christian Rub (Geppetto), and Cliff Edwards (Jiminy Cricket).—M.S. (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia. Matinées only. . . . ¶ Sutton, and Guild; through July 16. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through July 16, matinées only.)

The Playboys—This absorbing, uneven romantic comedy-drama, set in a small Irish town in 1957, takes its name from a travelling troupe. The heroine is an unwed mother named Tara (Robin Wright). She challenges every male authority figure in town and drives all the men wild—especially the violent, alcoholic constable, Sergeant Hegarty (Albert Finney), who seethes when he sees her with her actor lover Tom (Aidan Quinn). The screenwriters, Shane Connaughton (who co-wrote "My Left Foot") and Kerry Crabbe, are full of ideas and observations about orthodox religion, claustrophobic village mores, the craziness of life in a divided country, and the last gasp of strolling players before TV's ascendancy. Wright and Quinn are well matched, and the director, Gillies MacKinnon, and his cinematographer, Jack Conroy, provide images that sparkle with amorous possibilities. But the filmmakers don't funnel their panoply of themes gracefully into Tara's story. Her affair with Tom comes off as a foil to Finney's passionate portrait of stewed wrath and despair. He endows a clenched, masochistic character with such scale and force that he takes over the movie.—M.S. (5/18/92) (Gramercy, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

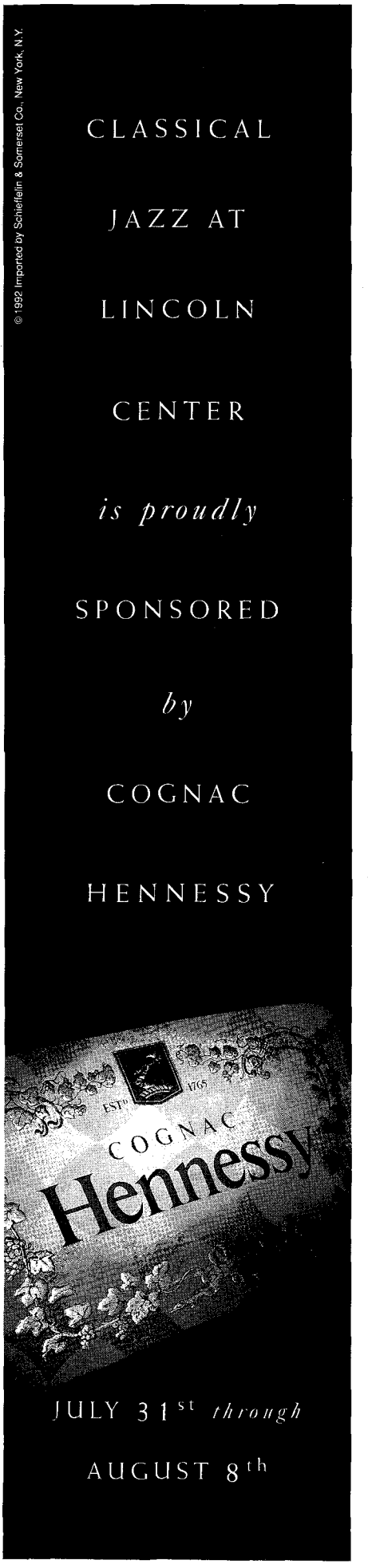
At the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, John Gilbert and Mae Murray in "The Merry Widow"

The Player—The title character of Robert Altman's new movie is a young Hollywood studio executive named Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), who, for no very good reason, murders an aspiring screenwriter. The picture is a brilliant dark comedy about the death of American filmmaking. It's like a documentary about a mirage: the world it shows us is sunlit and shimmering, and the people have the thin presence of holograms. Altman is doing one of his specialties here—exploring an odd American subculture—and when his idiosyncratic realism is applied to the insular, constantly self-regarding community of Hollywood "players" it has an almost hallucinatory effect. The movie has the exhilarating nonchalance of the director's seventies classics, and its tone is volatile, elusive: with breathtaking assurance, it veers from psychological-thriller suspense to goofball comedy to icy satire. Altman turns the self-reflective world of Hollywood into a fun house in which every grotesque distortion somehow appears to us as a newly discovered, paradoxical truth. Robbins gives a layered, richly suggestive performance—the sort of performance that Altman's style, at its best, produces without obvious effort. At sixty-seven, Altman still seems like the youngest filmmaker in America. Also with Greta Scacchi.—T.R. (4/20/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Worldwide Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza.)

Sister Act—Whoopi Goldberg stars as a Reno lounge singer on the lam from her murderous mobster ex-lover (Harvey Keitel). Disguised as a nun in a San Francisco convent, she manages to bring new music into the choir, fresh street faces into the pews, and a social-activist spirit into the revitalized congregation. The plot and the characters are almost insultingly perfunctory (the pseudonymous Joseph Howard is credited with the script), and when there isn't any rock on the soundtrack the moviemaking is listless. Still, the director, Emile Ardolino, who made "Dirty Dancing," knows how to use sixties hits for an over-all bounce that jumps audiences past dead patches. Goldberg maintains her gruff tone, which helps keep the film from stagnating with sappiness. If Maggie Smith glowers ineffectually as the Mother Superior, a couple of actresses—Kathy Najimy and Mary Wickes—imbue their nun roles with the euphoria of inspired farceurs. (Najimy defines "overjoyed.") The film isn't a divine comedy, and it's not satisfyingly profane either. But it generates a few laughs. It's got a good beat, and you can dance to it.—M.S. (6/15/92) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1; through July 16. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting July 17.)

Unlawful Entry—Madeleine Stowe and Kurt Russell play an upwardly mobile L.A. couple; Ray Liotta is the cop who thinks he's a better man for Stowe. For about ten minutes, the movie is an effective exploitation of atavistic male pride, with class warfare mixed in. But it swiftly degenerates into another cat-and-mice thriller—and this time both the cat and, fatally, the audience are much smarter than the mice. The film is short on observation and long on jeopardy. It's what TV executives call "a Jep movie," except that in TV Jep movies the victimized woman gets to avenge herself. Here she needs the protection of her husband. Jonathan Kaplan directed the script by Lewis Colick; Ken Lerner, as Russell's lawyer, and Roger E. Mosley, as Liotta's partner, contribute a smidgen of self-aware humor and realism.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Crown Gotham, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, National Twin.)

The Waterdance—This semi-autobiographical movie about paraplegics carries its weight of authority lightly. The writer and co-director, Neal Jimenez, whose credits include the screenplay for "River's Edge," became wheelchair-bound after a hiking accident, like his central figure here, a novelist named Joel Garcia (Eric Stoltz). Jimenez and his directing partner, Michael Steinberg, approach each problem head on, from racial tension in the hospital ward to Joel's sexual anguish, while trying to leave the incidents lifelike and ambiguous. There are no inspirational speeches, and every climax turns out to be anti- . But at best this film is a compendium of negative virtues. The men progress predictably toward railing at the universe. The movie's most original stroke is to center the action on a hyperconscious lead character. Unfortunately, Joel is the autobiographical hero as abashed apologist, laying out and criticizing his experiences without exposing his core. He's fuzzy and pallid compared to his compadres, the white racist biker Bloss (William Forsythe) and the black former ladies' man Ray Hill (Wesley Snipes). Forsythe's tender gnarliness and Snipes's electric lyricism are the reasons to see the movie.—M.S. (6/15/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.)



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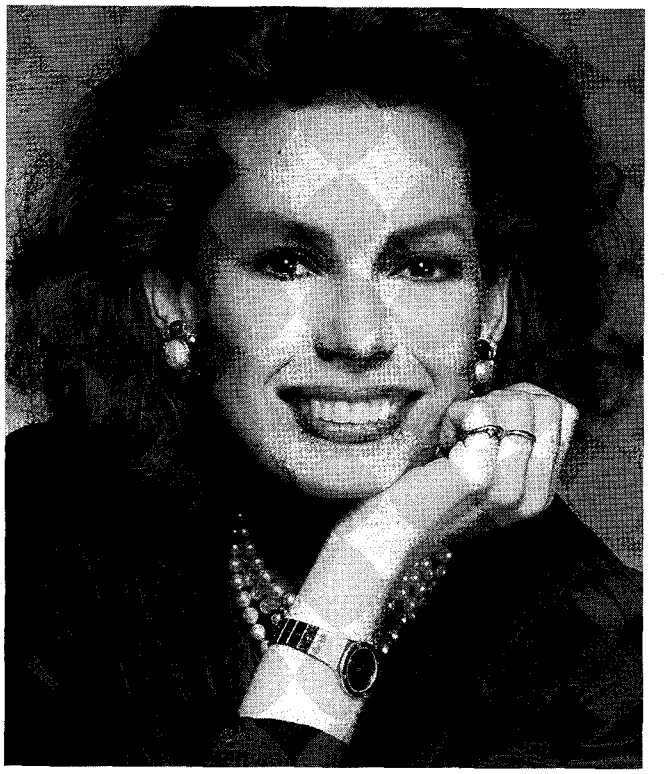

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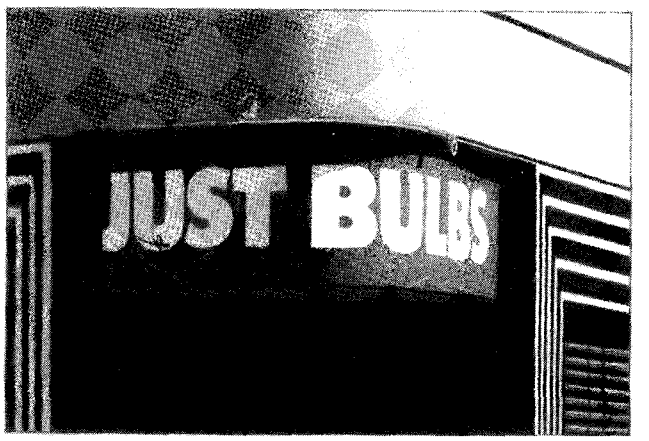
Notes and Comment

As a way of ending one's days in America, death by gunshot is becoming so common that the American Medical Association last month saw fit to publish nineteen studies and editorials on the subject. As Dr. C. Everett Koop, the former Surgeon General, and Dr. George Lundberg, the editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, note, the A.M.A. studies "paint a grotesque picture of a society steeped in violence, especially by firearms, and so numbed by the ubiquity and prevalence of violence as to seemingly accept it as inevitable." The studies have titles like "Gunshot Wounds to the Head and Neck" and "Penetrating Eye Injuries Related to Assault." One study finds that firearm homicide has become the second leading cause of death among high-school-age children, rising twenty-three per cent in just three years among young people in the suburbs and twenty-eight per cent among young people in the inner cities.

Drs. Koop and Lundberg don't believe that a society permeated by firearm homicide is really "inevitable." They propose, as a first step away from our predicament, that intentional violence, and particularly gunshot deaths, be redefined as a public-health emergency. Twenty years ago, a similar approach was used in the effort to reduce automobile death rates, and the redefining of car accidents as a public-health issue helped lead to safer roads, safer vehicles, stricter licensing, stricter drunk-driving laws, and a dramatic decline in automobile death rates. "We believe that comparable results can be anticipated by similarly treating gunshot wound casualties," the doctors write. Among the reforms proposed by the A.M.A. is a national system of gun registration and licensing which would require that gun owners and users meet a set of standards similar to those required of drivers and car owners—that they be of a certain age, demonstrate their knowledge of proper firearm use, be subject to performance monitoring, and so on.

This proposal, which seems to make perfect sense, recalled for us an argument that is sometimes made by Guido Calabresi, the dean of the Yale Law School, in his lectures. If society were really serious about reducing motor-vehicle casualties to the absolute minimum, Mr. Calabresi argues, the speed limit would be lowered to ten miles per hour. Because such a restriction on our movement seems onerous, we Americans declare—through the traffic laws that we do enforce—our willingness to pay roughly fifty thousand human lives each year as the price of our automotive mobility. Admittedly, the reasons for allowing cars and trucks to travel faster than ten miles per hour are more obvious than the reasons for having guns widely available, and yet a similar sort of unspoken compromise seems to occur. But how precious *is* our access to guns? Is it worth five thousand lives a year? Ten thousand? Is our collective calculation affected by the fact that young black males suffer by far the highest firearm-homicide rates of any group in America?



It is often said that private gun ownership is part of our frontier legacy. But though Canadians were at least as frontier-oriented as we were, and Australians were more so and until more recently, both Canada and Australia today have strict gun-control laws and correspondingly low firearm-homicide rates. The neighboring cities of Seattle and Vancouver provide a startling contrast. According to one article in the A.M.A.'s *Journal*, "both cities have comparable rates of law enforcement and social, economic, and ethnic makeup, and nearly identical rates of burglary, robbery, and simple and aggravated assault." Seattle, however, has minimal restrictions on firearm purchase, while in Vancouver "special permits are required and self-defense is not considered a valid reason to own a gun." Seattle's homicide rate is sixty-five per cent higher than Vancouver's.

There are estimated to be two hundred million firearms in private hands in this country, between sixty and seventy million of them handguns. Why? Some folks hunt, of course. Others simply enjoy firing away at targets and beer cans and imagined enemies. Many people feel more secure with a gun in the house (ignoring studies that show they are in fact far less safe). And then there are the legions of young people—especially young men—who feel increasingly driven to arm themselves just because so many of their contemporaries are armed. The motives of

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none of these groups argue for easy access to guns. The fear that criminals will always be able to find weapons is well founded, but the idea that having more guns in circulation makes us safer is not. The huge majority of gunshot deaths and injuries are inflicted not by career criminals using illegal weapons but by ordinary citizens. Reducing the number of guns available by restricting access to them will, in the long run, reduce the carnage they cause. The fact that the firearm-homicide rate in the United States is nearly seven times that of Australia, fifty-five times that of Britain, and fifty-eight times that of Japan is not a product of the American "character." It is a product of the number of guns—particularly handguns—readily available to Americans.

But the American people don't need to be convinced about stricter gun control. A 1990 Gallup Poll found that Americans strongly favor a host of serious restrictions: eighty-one per cent support registration of handguns; ninety-five per cent support a seven-day waiting period for the purchase of a handgun; seventy-two per cent support a total ban on semi-automatic assault weapons; seventy-eight per cent want laws covering the sale of all firearms to be "more strict." Unfortunately, our representatives in Congress and in state legislatures, under pressure from the National Rifle Association, consistently fail to reflect the people's will—let alone the public interest—in this area.

The N.R.A., with its annual operating budget of nearly a hundred million dollars, is rightly feared by politicians. And when the organization attacks a candidate who has had the temerity to support sensible gun laws, it doesn't necessarily do so in the area of gun control, where public sentiment so clearly favors stronger laws. The N.R.A.-financed advertising that helped defeat Representative Beryl Anthony in the Arkansas Democratic primary this spring, for instance, focussed on Mr. Anthony's overdrafts at the House bank. The only federal gun-control proposal currently under consideration, the so-called Brady Bill, which would require a waiting period for handgun purchases—and is, of course, opposed by the N.R.A.—was passed by the House of Representatives last year, but is stalled in the Senate and is given little chance of passage.

When the A.M.A. announced its findings and proposals last month, James Baker, the N.R.A.'s chief Washington lobbyist, told the *Times*, "Statistics show that 93,000 accidental deaths are caused by the medical profession annually. It would make more sense for these doctors to look at their own house first." Has a more bankrupt argument ever been advanced in our national debate?

• •

Candidate

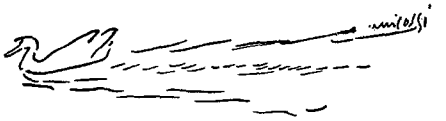
WITH the Democratic National Convention coming to town, we decided to call on the Department of Transportation and smoke out its plans for keeping traffic moving during this busy week. A receptionist directed us to the office of Victor Rosen, who is the department's assistant commissioner in charge of Manhattan traffic operations but whose staff members all address him as "Commissioner." Commissioner Rosen was sitting at the head of a conference table, and he invited us to join a meeting he was having with three of his most trusted colleagues: Gregory Perrin, the director of special events; Bernard Thurmond, the director of administrative control; and Geraldine Keeler, the chief of Manhattan operations.

Mr. Perrin, it turns out, has responsibility for managing the logistics during the Convention. He recited his battle plan in a brisk manner—much brisker than midday midtown traffic—while we made sketchy notes:

> Only 2 sts. clsd entrly (31 & 33 betw. 7th and 8th) . . . nrml regs in effect . . . 35 prime hotels, 7th to E. Sd., lo 50s-60s . . . 130 buses, bus lns. fr. hotels to MSG lt. p.m. and eves . . . cones & paper signs . . . NYPD and DOT pers. at intrsctns . . . "Don't impact reglr traffic" . . . Many conv.-affltd pkng lots / Meyers Syst.

"For the Convention, our enforcement people will be looking mainly for safety violations—hydrants, double-parking, bus stops, crosswalks," Mr. Perrin said. "We plan to do minimal towing."

This last remark stirred a recidivist impulse, and we recounted an experience we had recently: we left our car unattended on West Forty-third Street for about six minutes and returned to



find that it was already on its way to the pound.

"You say you left your emergency blinkers on?" Mr. Thurmond said. "Do you know what a car with the blinkers on is saying? It's saying, 'I'm illegally parked.' "

"We normally patrol the core—that's the area from Thirty-fourth to Fifty-ninth, from Third to Eighth Avenues—very extensively," Commissioner Rosen said. "Our tow-truck operators are in radio contact with their supervisors, who are in squad cars. They're all on the lookout for tow-eligible violations. As an integrity matter, we don't allow discretion to our officers in the field, especially as far as summonses are concerned. If they see a violation, they are mandated to issue a summons." He added, though, that if a supervisor happens upon a car parked in a bus stop in Herald Square, say, and a crippled woman pushing two babies in a stroller arrives in tears just as the tow truck is hooking up her badly rusted 1976 Oldsmobile, the supervisor has the option of cutting her some slack.

As Mr. Rosen spoke, it dawned on us that here was the no-nonsense-though-potentially-kinder-and-gentler pragmatist that the electorate might respond to. Would he be willing to run for President?

"Sure. Why not?" he said. Not only that; he already had a running mate in mind—Geraldine Keeler. Ms. Keeler has a well-established record of public service: twenty-seven years in the D.O.T., from meter maid on up. She appears to be about the same age as Mr. Rosen—well past forty but shy of fifty—and she has the same I've-heard-and-seen-everything demeanor.

"Want to do martial law?" Commissioner Rosen asked Ms. Keeler.

"I think we should order New York to bring back capital punishment," Ms. Keeler said.

"For parking violations?" the Commissioner asked.

"Especially if they put their blinkers on," Mr. Thurmond interjected.

Mr. Perrin volunteered to serve in a Rosen administration as Minister of Special Events, and the commissioner responded enthusiastically. He described a vision of his inauguration ceremony as "something on the order of a gigantic anti-scofflaw rally," and went on to say, "In my Administration, we want to be lean and mean. Not a lot of

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bureaucratic b.s. Sort of like Saddam Hussein. We'd get the berets, the boots, the whole nine yards. Lean and mean—with the public's best interests at heart, of course."

"Do you have a foreign policy?" we asked Commissioner Rosen, who grew up in Coney Island and describes his political affiliation as "stone independent."

"Yes," he said, without hesitation. "Diplomats had better watch where they park."

"Diplo towing!" Mr. Perrin said excitedly, as if recalling Desert Storm.

"The public loves us when we do diplo towing," Commissioner Rosen said. "Even though the foreign diplomats don't have to pay for the towing, the public gets some satisfaction."

What about reviving the economy?

He paused, then said, "I'm tempted to say more summonses, more revenue. We run a very cost-effective operation around here. When we clear spaces in commercial areas—when we tow double-parked vehicles so that commercial trucks can make deliveries—that is priming the economy of the city. So that sort of thing would be the keystone of our economic policy."

Ms. Keeler said, "You know, one thing you haven't even touched on is air quality."

"That's right!" Commissioner Rosen said as he bummed a cigarette from her. "Our environmental policy! What we try to do is to keep traffic moving, so that we don't have drivers sitting there breathing fumes."

Commissioner Rosen expressed no reluctance to get out there and campaign. "You talk to everybody all the time in this job, so I'm ready," he said. "I don't even go into the bathroom without having two conversations along the way. To get the job done, communication means everything."

"He's gonna whistle stop his way all the way up to the Bronx," Mr. Thurmond said.

Before leaving the building, we were introduced to Captain David Lindsay, of Violation Tow Services, who did not actually tow us from West Forty-third Street but supervises the truck driver who did, and to Traffic Enforcement Officer David Casey. Within the past few months, each of them has received a forty-five-dollar parking summons, and has dutifully paid it. When we remarked that Commissioner Rosen was considering running for President and that he had come up with a campaign slogan—"A vote for me opens up new avenues for progress and prosperity"—they seemed unsure what to think.

"He's a good boss," Captain Lindsay said. "As far as President of the United States, though, I can't see that."

"Personally, I'd like him to stay right here," Officer Casey said. "I'd like to see him progress if he wants, but I'd like to see him stay in this job. But don't get me wrong: he has the qualities of a leader."

"And may we continue to be worthy of consuming a disproportionate share of this planet's resources."

• •

Non-Stop

"MY name is Peter Benfaremo, but everyone calls me the Lemon Ice King of Corona. That's been the name of my business since 1946. What's my business? We have Italian-style ices in twenty-nine flavors. You don't see the sign in the front? Just like it says: 'Benfaremo the Lemon Ice King of Corona. Ices with Real Pieces of Fruit in It.' Excuse me a minute. Hey, Louie! There's a guy up at the counter who's picking up eleven cans of ices for his store! Sir, let me see your list. O.K.—lemon, raspberry, mint, cantaloupe, pistachio. All right, Louie will get them for you. Louie! *Louie!* Anyway, I grew up here in Corona, and my father had a little store right here, at 108th Street and Fifty-second Avenue, and he was making a few little fruit ices, nothing big. After I got out of the Army, I started this store next to him. I knew it was my calling. I was wounded in the war in Europe, and I thought to myself, Hey, you're going to die right here. Instead, I didn't. This was my destiny.

"You were wondering how I got the name Lemon Ice King. Look, I don't know—I didn't set out to go and get it. It just came to me. You ever hear of the Sultan of Swat? The Yankee Clipper? Those are baseball names. They just came about. Well, Lemon Ice King is the same thing. It just came about. I don't know who first called me the Lemon Ice King. Maybe I did. Anyway, that's who I am

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now. I'm famous. I'm famous and I'm infamous, I always say. I'm famous because of my merchandise, and I'm infamous because I fight with everyone. Everyone's always on me all the time. 'Mr. Benfaremo, can I have an extra this, and a couple of that, and can I have a sixty-nine-cent ice in a dollar-size cup?' And my attitude is: Look, I can't be doing for everybody all the time. I'll fight with anyone. Excuse me a second. Hey, who's this guy? Yes, you. Can I help you?"

"Yes, Mr. Benfaremo. I'm interested in carrying your ices in my store."

"Look, let me ask you one question. Can't you see I'm talking to someone? Do I look like I can take care of you now? No. I cannot. I am with this person, and when I'm done I can discuss this with you. I only have two hands, right? You don't want to wait? No? Fine. O.K., goodbye. See that? See? He's got some little store and he wants to carry *my* merchandise, and I should suddenly bow down and holler with pleasure? Good riddance. Louie, where's Anthony? Anthony! I need you up front. *Anthony!*

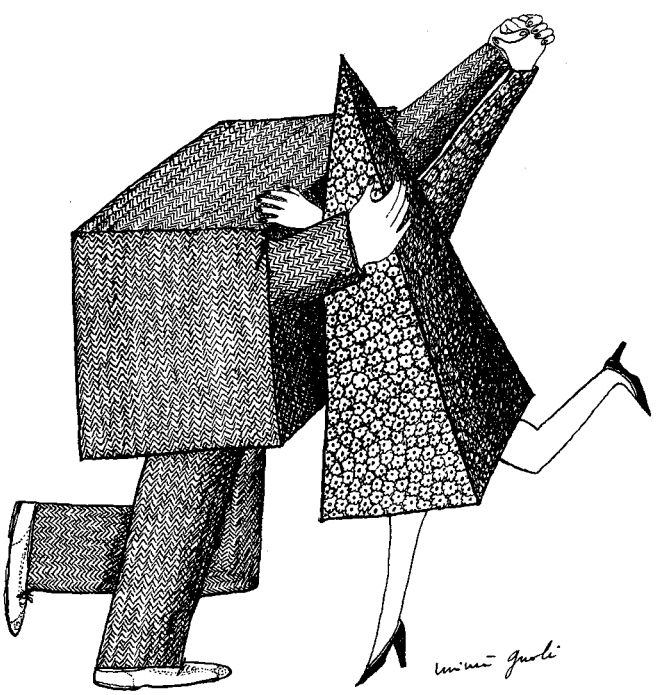
"Now, where was I? You were asking what this round thing above the name of the store is. I don't know what it is. It's a Mexican hat. Why a hat? I don't know, maybe it's like the hat my father used to wear. Who thought of it as the store symbol? Who knows? Who knows who thought of the symbol for General Electric? It was just a good idea, that's all. Everything in the store is exactly the way it was when I first started the business. Psychologically, it's very important to keep it that way. People come and see the same things—the Lemon Ice King of Corona T-shirts on display here, and the jars of nuts on display on the back wall, and the list of flavors on the counter—and it absolutely must stay the same. Someday, someone will take this over from me, and they have to agree to keep it exactly the same or I'm not going to give it to them. It has to be my way. I won't let them desecrate it. I'm getting ready to get out, though. I'm seventy years old. I'm not made of steel. Today, I don't feel so good. Most likely, I'll die here. My heart's pumping like crazy. I need a rest already. Hey, look at this guy at the counter with the watches. Hey, you, how much you want for those things?"

"Nice watch, fifteen dollars."

"Fifteen dollars? Whaddya, pulling my leg? Forget about it. Two dollars, maybe. Anyway, come back later. What is he, kidding? *Fifteen* dollars? Anthony, hey, where've you been? Anthony? Louie, get Anthony up front, it's getting busy. See? What did I tell you? It never stops. I work all night and all day. I haven't gone for a walk in the park in thirty-four years. Last time I went, my son was eight months old. It's time for me and Mrs. Benfaremo to have some fun in life. You know something? I have never in my life—never, and I am seventy years old—bought a brand-new car. I'm doing fine, but personally I don't need to flash it around. My '78 Chevy takes me exactly the same place a brand-new Cadillac would take me.

"Let me tell you something. Wait a minute. *Louie!* Tell the new kid not to put the containers in the freezer that way. He's new. He doesn't know. He has to learn. What's this pulling up? Oh, the U.P.S. truck. Never a dull moment around here. Let me see that order. *Anthony!* I didn't tell you to take your boots off, did I? I want you to leave them on for when you go back into the freezer later. Anyway, what I was going to tell you is that to succeed at something you need to have desire. You need the motivation. I am totally unique. No one in this entire country has the merchandise we have. Also, I am practical. I will not make certain flavors. Mango I won't make. Weird stuff I won't make. Some guys who worked for me a couple of years ago, they broke off on their own, and started making the oddest-ball-flavored ices in the world—mango this and banana-something that—and, of course, eventually they went out of business. I found out some guy was carrying their merchandise and carrying mine also in his store, and I said to him, 'No way you're carrying both. Carrying both! You can drop dead.' And you know what? Three weeks later, he did. No kidding. But I had nothing to do with it. He had heart trouble. The fact is, though, I am very vindictive. I am. You might think: Peter Benfaremo, he's a short guy, he's a plumpy guy, what can he do to hurt me? Well, I have my ways.

"Come on back here and I'll show you where we make the merchandise. Step over these boxes. These are boxes of macaroni. I make macaroni for the boys who work for me sometimes, for their lunch break. Anthony! Where's the new kid? What's he doing? *Anthony!* Here's where we make the ices. You know, it took me three years to make grape ice. You want to know why? Because I couldn't make grape to my satisfaction, that's why. Here, taste this. You say it's good? Of course it's good. I never eat the stuff. Oh, I used to eat pineapple occasionally. Now I never eat it. What would I need to eat it for? I know what it is. You wonder what it's been like being the Lemon Ice King of Corona? It's been a big thing, a very big thing. That's the truth. I was born for this."



Safe Geometry

Genie

IF you go, right this minute, into the big, splendid space in the southeast corner of the lobby floor of the Plaza Hotel, what you will see is a more or less modern room with a bad

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ceiling; if you look up, you see louvers, vents, and some kind of substance that seems to have been sprayed on. This, however, is a step up from what was here before—namely, a clothing store. This is a space whose history we have *followed*.

What we remember above all about this space is that on April 1, 1934, the Persian Room opened here. The idea was that New Yorkers dressed in black-and-white needed something colorful to move against. The idea was that rich people *deserved* something—an absolutely strange idea, which called forth imaginative décor. The Persian Room had five murals, depicting events in the history of the Persian Empire, and it was rivalled for *luxe* only by the Maisonette Russe, at the St. Regis. To be fair, one should say it the other way around—that the Maisonette Russe was rivalled only by the Persian Room.

Nowadays, the space lives in a kind of limbo. We hear that Donald Trump is "making up his mind." Special events—involving food and drink, not sweaters and skirts—are held here. We heard about one such event—a great big Anglo-Indian meal—and decided to look into it.

There are five kitchens at the Plaza. To get to the big one, you go through a door just behind the Palm Court. It's one of the wonderful secret doors of Manhattan—like the one in the Times Square subway station which led to the old Knickerbocker Hotel. One moment, you are in the Palm Court, and the next moment you are through this door. You find a woman at a desk, presiding over this door. You keep on going and you are in the big kitchen. We went into the big kitchen. To our right was the garde-manger, where we counted twelve cooks and six preparation tables. In front of us was Ismail Merchant, the movie producer ("Howards End" is his latest movie), who is only slightly less famous for being a cook. He was moving with great energy—conducting a rehearsal for the special Anglo-Indian meal. He had taken his suit jacket off and was working in his suspenders. The place was warm and steamy. Feet were sticking to the rubber mats on the floor. Mr. Merchant was busy at a huge stove. Joseph Friel, the banquet chef of the Plaza, was in attendance. We noticed, next to Mr. Merchant, a bag of rice called Dehra Dun. We decided that at this moment everything was highly symbolic. An Anglo-Indian meal being planned for the Space in Limbo—surely that meant a return to the spirit of the Persian Room. Mr. Merchant seemed to us to be a kind of genie. We noticed that the Dehra Dun rice bag had a drawing of a goddess blessing the rice on it. We also noticed on the floor a big—really, an enormous—cauldron of chicken stock.

"What's in the chicken stock?" we asked Mr. Friel.

"Two hundred pounds of chicken bones, celery, onions, leeks, carrots, and plenty of fresh water."

"Look, look, Joseph put a beautiful net over it!" Mr. Merchant exclaimed. Mr. Friel had put a piece of mesh over a lemon cut in half. The mesh-and-lemon combination seemed propitious to Mr. Merchant—something, he said, that the goddess on the rice package would approve of. Other things he said that he himself approved of were coconut sauce over bluefish and coconut in general.

We wandered around the kitchen, and we began to think about the Rose Room. The Rose Room is two layers down from the Persian Room if you think of the space in the hotel's southeast corner (lobby floor) as having a series of historical layers. The Rose Room was what you might call a respectable family room with an *atmosphere*. It opened in 1921. Under the Rose Room in historical-layer terms is nothing but bare bones—a hotel dining room without a name. It occurred to us that the space we were considering could be made to fit the pattern of Rome—with the hotel dining room as the Etruscan Period, the Rose Room as Republican Rome, and the Persian Room as the glory of Empire. This scheme is workable only if one ignores the fact that between the Rose Room period and the Persian Room period there was a time when the space housed a Studebaker showroom.

"Why did you become a chef?" we asked Mr. Friel.

"I grew up in the business—I didn't have a choice."

"Big kitchen," we said.

"One of the biggest in the United States," he said.

"Does room service come out of here?" we asked.

"Room service and the Oak Room are out of another kitchen."

"Why does room service take so long, anyway?" we asked.

Mr. Friel just looked at us.

LOIS LANE NOTICES A NEW MALE SENSITIVITY
It isn't only Clark – Jimmy Olsen and Perry White have also become mild-mannered.
J. Harris

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DO THE WINDOWS OPEN?

FOR several years I was afraid to ride the South Fork Bus. Then one day I rode it. The day itself was over, since I couldn't get my courage up for the afternoon bus to New York, but I did make it to the 7 P.M. For one year I had driven myself back and forth from East Hampton to New York. It had taken me ten years to manage this feat. Then, all of a sudden, after almost mastering it, I could never do it again.

Even when I drove the better but longer way onto the Northern State Parkway and across the Triborough Bridge and down the crater-filled F.D.R. Drive to get to my apartment in SoHo, the trip became so horrible that I couldn't keep doing it. Once I crossed that bridge at night in a thunderstorm with cars speeding past me on the left and right. But the part of the Grand Central Parkway near LaGuardia started to cause the no-breathing attacks after a few trips. Nothing like the more serious attacks of paralysis of the lungs that used to overcome me on the worse route—the Long Island Expressway and the deadly approach to the Midtown Tunnel, with trucks passing on the right and three lanes of headlights coming toward me on the left.

On one of my last trips a single truck caused one of these attacks. I thought I could drive among trucks! And anyway, how many trucks could there be at night? There could be a whole highway full of trucks at night on the Long Island Expressway, and one of these trucks in front of me had an open cargo, if it could be called a cargo—a load of dust. Dust was its cargo, probably asbestos dust was what it was filled with, and this asbestos dust was not packed up in barrels and tied down but simply heaped onto the back and covered with a thin gray sheet. The sheet was not even tied down, so it flapped around and the dust was blowing into the air, and there was no way to see through these gusts of asbestos dust.

I'll pass the truck, I thought—because I had learned how to pass, with "Così Fan Tutte" playing, but I quickly discovered that I hadn't learned to pass on a curve with no visibility, no matter what opera of Mozart's was on and no matter how loud. I was trying to pass the asbestos truck on the left, I had my signal on, only a few seconds had gone by while I was waiting for a part of the road that was not curved. But whenever one came up, the dust would start to blow, and it would be a case of trying to pass into dust through dust to nowhere, just like actual death as we imagine it. As I waited these few seconds with Karl Böhm conducting Alfredo Kraus, cars began to squeeze in and pass on the right. Couldn't they tell that I was going to pass at the proper moment?

My last trip took place on a rainy night. Although I had listened to the weather reports all day and they had warned only of occasional light rain, heavy rain overtook the road at the safe, wide, empty part east of Manorville. Before I could get into the right lane, a gigantic white-and-blue vehicle roared past, going sixty or seventy, splashing highway water so that I was completely blinded for several seconds. This vehicle was the South Fork Bus. I thought, "It would be better to be on the South Fork Bus than to be passed on the right by it in a rainstorm."

I prepared myself for that first trip on the bus by seeing someone else off. The passenger I chose to see off was my husband. "It's not so bad," I said. Nothing is so bad if it isn't summer. The people, the things they have with them and on them; namely, their faces, their bodies, their hair styles—none of this is so bad in cold weather. But even as I said that it wasn't so bad I noticed that the seats were too close together, and I couldn't help wondering what it would be like to be aboard when the vehicle filled up with humans and departed from pleasant, tree-lined Main Street. When it got *onto the road. Onto the road*, with fifty other humans and their paraphernalia. *Onto the Expressway.* The thought filled me with horror.

My husband did not mind his time on the bus. He said things like "I work, I read, I sleep. It's great—I'm not driving."

I would never be able to work, read, or sleep. I was still working on a series of photographs of flowers in decline, and there wouldn't be any flowers on the bus. My other project was to photograph the reproductive surgeon Dr. Arnold Loquesto with his dog, and they wouldn't be on the bus, either. Reading in vehicles caused nausea, and sleeping on a bus on a highway was out of the question. "Are there seat belts?" I asked my husband.

"No. Why? You mean you're afraid to ride the South Fork Bus?"

"Not afraid. Do the windows open?"

"No. Windows on these new things

"My ignorance of the law was simply appalling."

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don't open anymore. Why—you need the windows to open?"

"It would be better if they could be opened."

"But who wants to open the windows on the Long Island Expressway?" he said.

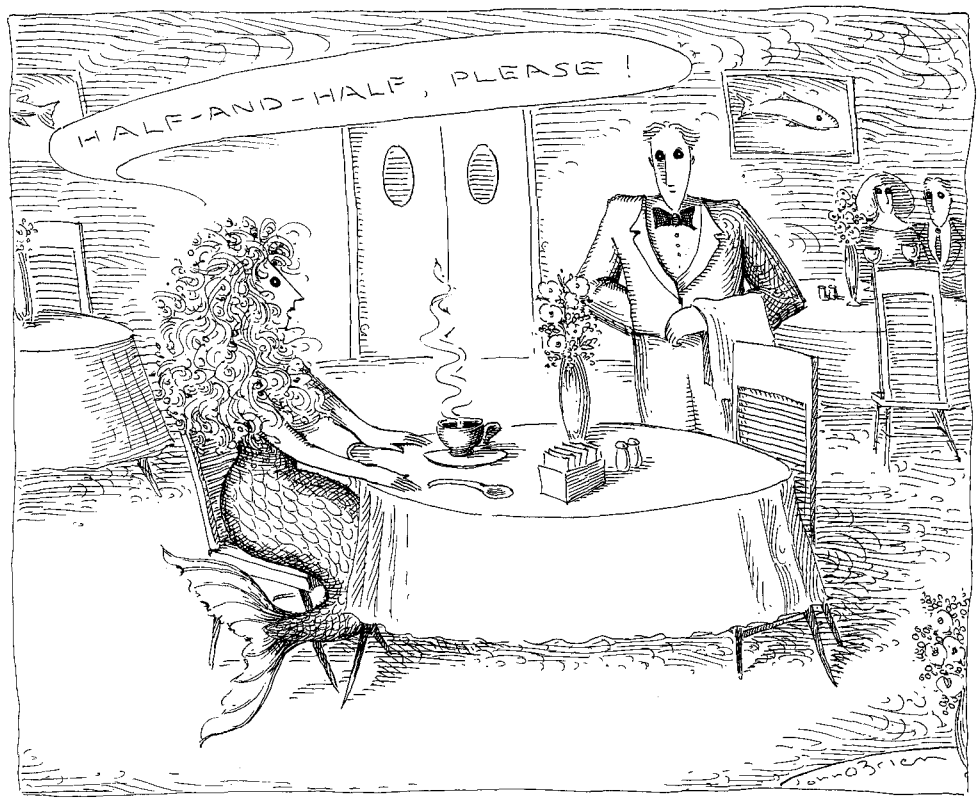
AS the departure time approached for my first trip on the bus, I thought that this must be the way people feel when waiting to board a plane. They're always telling us that cars are more dangerous than planes. Why not be afraid of both? I'll take half a Xanax to enable me to get aboard, I decided. A kindly periodontist had prescribed some for a root-extraction session, and I had eleven pills left. People I knew in Southampton and East Hampton were always trying to get my Xanax away from me. One of these people was an anxious flower arranger. Once, in a discussion of highway driving, he mentioned that he couldn't drive on the Expressway at all. He told me this with a look of fear in his large, blue, flower-arranging eyes. These driving conversations had made him my favorite person to talk to in Southampton and East Hampton. "The traffic will be over by six, but then it will be dark," he said. "Aren't you afraid to drive in the dark?"

"It's not the dark. It's the headlights," I said.

"Yes! The headlights make me crazy. Forget it. I can't even do it in the daylight. My last time I broke into a sweat, the panic started, and when I got to the city I ran to St. Patrick's to say a prayer."

I had confided in a religious, panic-stricken flower arranger. Which was more scary, his religious fervor or his discussion of floral arrangements for funerals? Both gave me shivers.

I felt brave as I waited out in the cold night for the South Fork Bus. Very few people waited with me. This bus is so big, I thought—it must be safer than a car. "We're the biggest thing on the road," a confident middle-aged male passenger said to everyone in a spirit of camaraderie as the bus came down the street. But I was not the comrade of any of the passengers on the South Fork Bus, I thought as I watched them board on that first dark winter night.



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I determined that the safest seat would be on the right and in the middle. In a crash the front of the bus would fold up, crunching together the driver and the first few rows. The left side would go right into those three lanes of oncoming headlights that I had studied during my own driving experiences. The back would smash together if the bus was hit from behind. The middle could jackknife, but I'd heard that this kind of accident was rare.

The back seats were near the bathroom, and an important rule in travelling and in dining out is to avoid sitting near plumbing. Yet, even with this rule seeming to make perfect sense, certain passengers on the South Fork Bus chose the bathroom corner as their most desired place to sit. After watching a series of almost normal-looking individuals head for various sections of the middle and front, I saw that a tall man, all in black leather, was heading right for the seat across from the dreaded bathroom door. He was between fifty and sixty, and almost bald—he had some hair, but it was very short and gray. Probably he was a member of some sadomasochist-black-leather Hampton set, the first of his kind I'd ever seen. The minute he got to the back I heard a loud cough. Not a normal cough. A loud, choking, grunting, screaming kind of cough. Maybe his choosing the back seat was simply a matter of wanting to cough alone, to save his fellow-passengers the experience of hearing this cough at closer range, and to preserve whatever dignity a black-leather sado man could have. Before everyone was seated he coughed again. Other people were getting afraid, not just me. I figured I had gotten to the normal amount of fear with that half a Xanax in my brain. I saw that some had not even noticed the cough and were getting themselves ready for the trip with their newspapers and shopping bags and parcels.

People were making themselves comfortable—they didn't think that this was going to be their last day on earth. One woman had a special neck pillow, another had a lap robe. Others had beverages—coffee, tea, and juice. Although the South Fork Bus was known for giving out free Perrier, these passengers could not wait. They had magazines and books, and about half of them had headphones. The other half were going to take naps. Naps were planned for the Long Island Expressway! I saw people adjusting their seats backward into other people's knee

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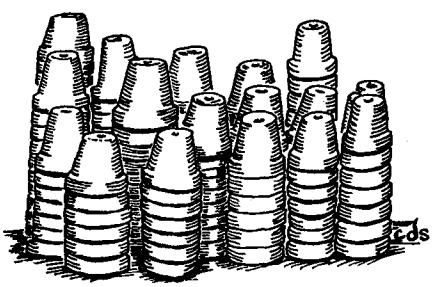
space. Certain passengers were polite and consulted the people behind them, others did whatever they pleased. Supposedly in warmer weather, when I was in Nova Scotia or Maine, fights broke out about this and other things.

The first step I had to take to get ready was to tie myself into my seat with the belt from my reversible alpaca coat. I will have to remember to take this alpaca seat belt off the armrests when I arrive in Manhattan, I thought, because it would be impossible to get another. The one thing of value that I had learned from seeing a Viennese psychiatrist in his newly restored Art Deco building on Central Park West was information on how to obtain this coat. As I went up in the splendid elevator I couldn't help staring at the coat on a woman who looked exactly my age—at the time, thirty-nine. She was kind enough to volunteer the name of a store in England, and several overseas phone calls enabled me to have the same coat. Having read that the wrong kind of seat belt can be more dangerous than none at all, I knew that this was the wrong kind, the kind that causes ruptured spleens and herniated other organs. Still I kept to my plan and tied one end of the belt to the outer armrest and the other end to the center armrest.

Next I would get some Mozart into my earphones—I would add Mozart to my brain, along with the Xanax. This winning combination had helped me through oral surgery, where they have a new device—a pellet gun to shoot bullets of Novocain into the roof of the mouth. It had helped me not to faint as I heard those bullets shoot in, and felt them, too.

I had decided that this trip would not require a Mozart opera. A piano sonata would be enough—a trio, a string quartet, or a divertimento might work. Before I could get my earphones on, the extremely weird hostess appeared. She said her name was Cindy, and began giving the rules of the South Fork Bus. She must have graduated from the est program or some kind of mind-training course, because she was so overly agreeable and pleasant that there had to be a reason for it. "She's an est graduate," I remembered my haircutter, Francine, saying of a certain hair-streaker when I asked "Why is she so cheerful?" "You mean it's that fake cheer?" I asked. "More or less," she said. "At first we couldn't stand it, but then we got used to it." Unlike Francine, I couldn't get used to things.

How had Cindy come to the point in life where she could stand to ride back and forth on the Long Island Expressway, I wondered, and I thought it was something she might wonder, too. Maybe, before her trips, she smoked several ounces of marijuana to keep



from wondering. Because even the est in her background wouldn't have been enough to allow her to act this way.

Then there was the driver—a red-haired, middle-aged woman who looked as if she had just spent the day in front of a TV, smoking packs of Camels in preparation for her long drive on the South Fork Bus, where smoking was not allowed, "and that includes the restroom." I was thankful for that rule, and I thought I had so many things to be thankful for that if I survived the trip I might run to St. Patrick's, too.

Just into the andante grazioso—I was tied in tightly—I saw that Cindy had made her way up the aisle and was being argued with by a spoiled-looking sixty-year-old man in a heavy, gray,

JULY

Deep pools of shade beneath dense maples,
the dapples as delicious as lemon drops—
textures of childhood, and its many flavors!
The gratefulness of cool, the bottles of
sarsaparilla and iodine-red cream soda
schooled like fish, on their sides,
in the watery ice of the zinc-lined cooler
in the shade of the cherry trees
planted by the town baseball diamond,
where only grownups cared what the score was
and the mailman took his ups with a grunt
that made the crowd in its shirtsleeves laugh.
The sun kindled freckles like a match
touching straw, and beneath a tree
a quality reigned like the sound of a gong,
solemn and sticky and calm. Then the grass
bared the hurry of ants, and each blade
bent to some weight, some faint godly tread
we could not see. The dapples
were not holes in the shade but like pies,
bulging up, and air tasted of water,
and water of metal, and metal of what
would never come—real change, removal
from this island of stagnant summer,
the end of sarsaparilla and its hint
of licorice taste, of sassafras twig,
of things we chewed with the cunning of Indians,
to whom all trees had souls, the maples no more
like birches than clouds are like waterfalls.
The dying grass smelled especially sweet
where sneakers had packed it flat,
or out of the way, in the playground corner,
where the sun had forgot to stop shining.
This was the apogee, July, a month
like the piece of a dome where it flattens
and reflects in a smear, high above us,
the ant-children busy and lazy below.

—JOHN UPDIKE

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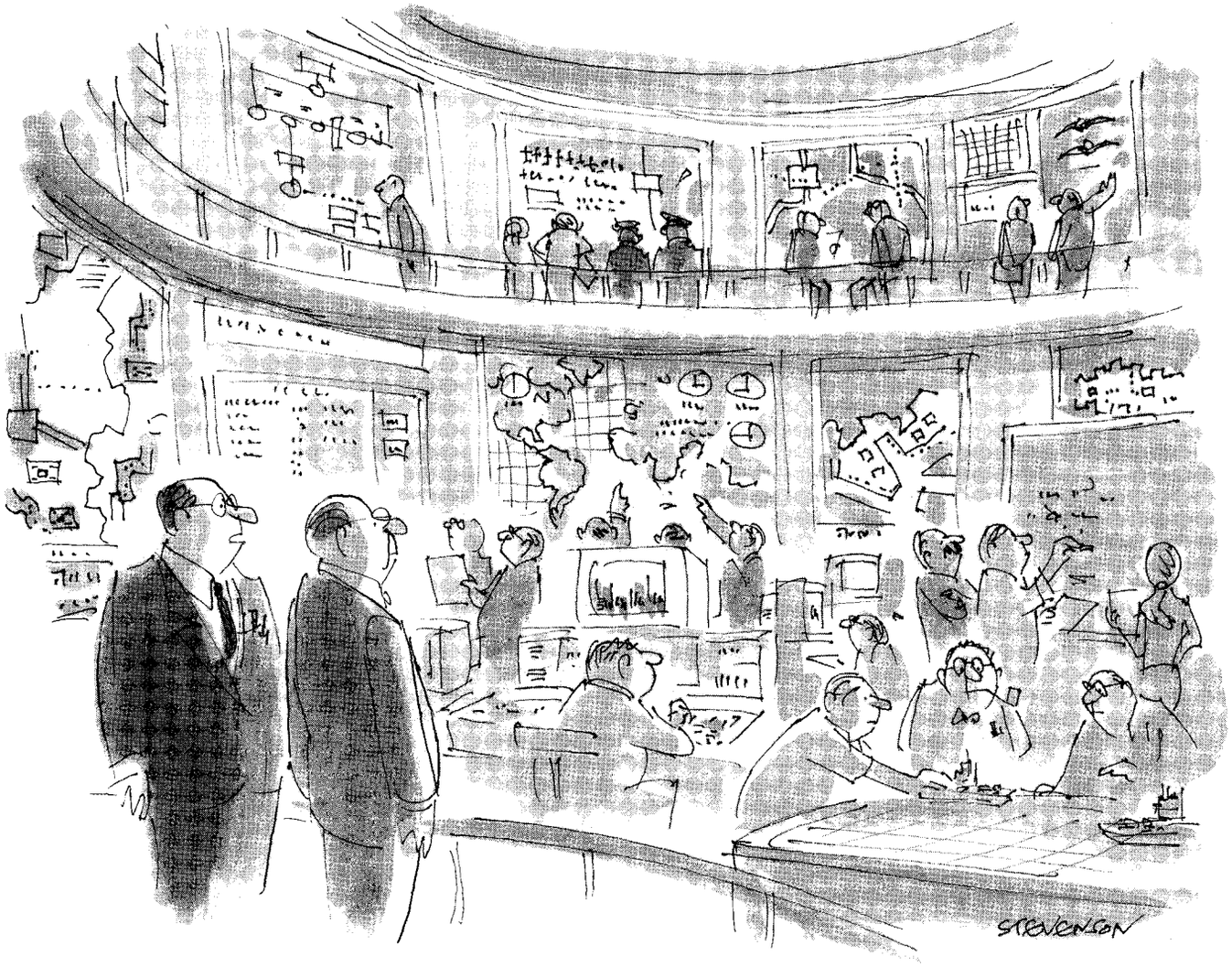

"Put simply, the mission is to discover a potential enemy who could justify our three-hundred-billion-dollar defense budget."

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hand-knitted sweater. The passenger wanted to be allowed to use his eastbound ticket to ride westbound. This was strictly forbidden, but the passenger had a reason why it shouldn't be forbidden in his case. Cindy had twisted herself into a physical position of sympathy and understanding, bending over the passenger with her head tilted and her body turned so that the next passenger was only an inch or two from her hip joint. "It's really something that we're not allowed to do in any case, but I do understand why you think your case is different, and you know what, I *am* going to do it, but if this were ever known I would lose my job—not that this should be anything for you to concern yourself with." Perhaps the marijuana dose had kicked in to the point where she'd lost all concept of time and didn't know how long this conversation was going on.

As I watched the other passengers calmly paying their fares, it occurred to me that most of the men on the left side of the bus looked like antique dealers. The proportion seemed greater than the proportion viewed in other activities around the town. The junk-bond traders from Southampton had not yet boarded. When they did board, they would be angry that the good seats had been taken by this kind of passenger. But at least then it would be time to get that Perrier. The hostess had promised this.

PASSENGERS at Southampton turned out to have more materialistic and less intellectual paraphernalia than passengers from East Hampton. One woman with platinum-blond hair had five big shopping bags from the Saks Fifth Avenue Southampton branch, and she was in an angry mood. She'd been drinking. I could smell the alcohol particles in the air. She was one of those fifty-five-year-old women who always wear black or red, or both together. A red cashmere turtleneck sweater—everything else, including the coat she took off when she sat down, was black—and all those pieces of jewelry I couldn't identify except for the Rolex watch and the Cartier watch. She had one of each, plus several other kinds of gold bracelets. She was sitting right across the aisle, so I could study her jewelry the whole trip if I needed to.

At last, it was time for the refreshments. But not only wasn't it Perrier, it was some cheap club soda in a plastic bottle and served in plastic cups. All

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along I had thought that it was going to be individual green glass bottles for everyone. The hostess was asking people if they wanted little bags of peanuts and even asked some, "Would you like two?" Several were saying yes. One antique dealer had to ask if he could have two. Just the kind of thing I was afraid of but could not imagine—soon the entire bus had the odor of chewed peanuts. How long would the peanut odor last with the poor ventilation system was something I couldn't get off my mind. Why hadn't these people heard that peanuts are contaminated by the carcinogenic mold aflatoxin?

I noticed that other men had just as poor peanut-eating styles as my husband. Maybe my husband was not so bad. Maybe men are like this, as my exercise teacher, the dancer Katherine Glass, used to say. One man emptied the bag of peanuts into his hand, then threw them all at once into his mouth. Another one held the opened packet to his mouth with his head back and tapped the packet to get the peanuts out.

The time had come to complain about the temperature. It was about one hundred degrees in the bus. People were tearing off their cashmere scarves and sweaters. "We're trying to control the heat," Cindy said. "I know it's awful." Soon there was no heat. The platinum-blond, jewelry-laden passenger was getting angrier as she put her black coat back on. I saw that she was eating peanuts, even though she needed to lose ten pounds—her wrists were fattened up under her gold watches. One of the antique dealers didn't mind the wildly fluctuating temperature conditions, but he was complaining that his overhead light didn't aim right on his newspaper.

Somewhere around Manorville, Cindy made an announcement. "As you may have noticed we are having a lot of trouble temperature-wise," she said. "We can't control the heat, but we want you all to know that we're trying." Unfortunately, I had taken my earphones off to hear this announcement. Now I had the word "temperature-wise" stamped into my brain, and I also realized that the coughing man was still coughing at timed intervals. It was not a real cough, I suddenly knew, but a sign of Tourette's syndrome, where the afflicted person involuntarily shouts obscenities and has no recollection of having done so. This man had mastered the cough as a disguise, or he had not yet reached the obscenity stage. Perhaps it began with a cough—I couldn't recall, although this was my husband's favorite disease to read about.

Still, this was a better way to ride than driving myself, I thought, even though it was one hundred degrees for half the trip and thirty for the other half. I decided I would become a regular rider of the South Fork Bus throughout the winter. No one even noticed when I untied myself from my seat.

THEN there was the trip back. Nobody had told me what it was like to board the South Fork Bus at Fortieth Street and Third Avenue. I had only my husband's version of the facts, which was "It's right near my office—a perfect short walk." But, then, the opinion of a man who works in midtown, an architect who would choose to spend his life in the ugliest part of midtown—what is the opinion of this man worth? There are so many ugly office buildings in midtown now, and his is the ugliest. When you see this building you can think only one thing. "WHY?" is the thing. "Why? Why? Why?" But when you read architects' explanations of why this or that is in their plans, they have answers. Not that anyone would ask an architect why, just as no one would put an architect in jail for crimes of architecture; there is already such a prison-space shortage.

On a particularly deformed strip of the low Sixties around Second Avenue there is a building that's constructed of a material which cannot be identified. It's a color between that of a dead salmon and a dead rat. How can this be possible when these colors are so far apart? It's possible because they've been mixed together the way dog food was mixed together before there were any health regulations about its contents. Ground-up parts of old dead anything still go into dog food, apparently, things Ralph Nader says are in hot dogs—lips, ears, hooves. There are even worse ones, which Ralph Nader doesn't always list.

Why can't buildings be built according to the specifications of Prince Charles, I thought when first I saw the sight of East Fortieth Street. Why can't Prince Charles be in charge? East Fortieth Street was filled with gigantic, new gray-and-black buildings—if the sky was blue on any day, there would be no way to see it.

A commandant from the bus company was lining up the prisoners in some kind of cavernous space on East Fortieth Street—it wasn't clear what the space was, but some architect must have described it as something. It was a kind of mall space without any stores, thus combining the worst parts of city life and suburb life. The commandant was drinking coffee out of a plastic-foam cup. He had a look that identified his origins as Montauk and Poland. Yet he was in charge here, with an evil smile that could have meant the buses were not headed for any Hampton. His smile hinted that he knew about all kinds of things that were going to go wrong on the trip.

As I looked around I saw that I was trapped, waiting on East Fortieth Street in a cavernous nowhere surrounded by

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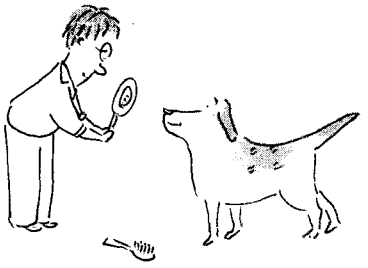

midtown. I was gripped by horror at the thought of what it would be like to stroll aimlessly through this part of Manhattan. Always have a purpose and walk rapidly between appointments, to work, and on errands. In this way you cannot be overwhelmed, overtaken, enveloped by the mammoth emptiness of square gray spaces and buildings. Your tiny remnant of a soul, crushed into a minute fragment of itself by travelling the streets of New York—your soul can't be obliterated if you keep walking. Walk briskly, ride, escape if it's over fifty degrees, wear dark glasses if the sun is out, stay near Central Park on the Upper East Side, never go to a business district on weekends, never even be in New York on a weekend. Even a Friday is not safe—don't let yourself try to imagine what it would feel like to be on Park Avenue and Forty-sixth Street on a Sunday in the summer. You would be the only one there—maybe a lost tourist or a derelict in some state of delirium tremens would be someone to share the empty corner with. Your view would include the Scaffold Building, a building designed to incorporate the look of metal scaffolding into its façade.

By talking to the commandant as if I had normal, casual thoughts on my mind—I was getting to like him—I found out that the bus was on the way down from the Seventy-third Street stop: the better, Upper East Side, first stop. I knew that the passengers who had boarded there would have that smug first-stop look on their privileged Upper East Side faces. But when the bus pulled up I saw that some of them had chosen those dangerous first-row seats. How stupid people could be, even if they lived on the Upper East Side. It was then I decided that in the future I'd go uptown to Seventy-third Street, all the way from SoHo, in order to board the bus with this smug group.

On the trips from Long Island, I discovered that any kind of person could get on the bus at any stop. One ride from East Hampton started out so well that I wasn't prepared for what I soon saw. It was still cold out, and something like a real winter day from the past. It was almost dusk and I could see out the window that the sky looked as if it might snow, but I knew that in the new greenhouse weather this was not a realistic hope. As I waited for the bus to start, I was thinking about what the pharmacist in "The Stranger" says to Orson Welles, the Nazi Franz Kindler: "Looks like it's coming up for snow." My view of the sky and my happy memory of that film were both suddenly obstructed by a six-feet-six creature who looked exactly like Frankenstein, except for his face, which was kinder and sweeter than the monster's face. He did have that protruding frontal bone in his forehead, but his forehead was small and low. He had to fold up his long arms and legs in order to get into the tiny space provided by the bus company for its passengers, the way you have to fold a marionette to get it into its little box. I felt sorry for the man as I noticed his long wristbones sticking out of his jacket sleeves, which were several inches too short. His pants legs were much too short, also. He sat down in the seat across from mine. He wore a reddish-brown box-plaid suit and a lopsided Frankenstein-style toupee, the exact same color brown as his suit. The toupee was tilted too far forward, and, underneath, his own normal-colored hair was visible—darker brown with gray. I'd seen this kind of toupee mistake on other men, including something I thought I saw on Dennis Hopper. The box-plaid colors of his suit were turquoise blue and orange. He wore an orange shirt to match one color and white socks with turquoise blue stripes around the tops to match the other. Before long he took out a bag with his lunch or dinner. The meal appeared to be a liverwurst sandwich, and after eating this sandwich he ate two bananas. Then he took out a bag of Pepperidge Farm cookies. When I checked to see which kind of Pepperidge Farm cookie such a man would choose, I was surprised to see that it was Chessmen. In my whole life of acquaintance with this brand of cookie I'd never seen anyone buy or eat Chessmen. The Frankenstein man ate about half a bag of Chessmen and then began to read the *Times Book Review*. He was a big man, he had to eat a lot, I tried to tell myself. Still, there could never be a reason to eat liverwurst, or animals in any form.

I FOUND out that bad things happened at East Seventy-third Street, too. Once, a woman with a German accent was complaining, in a voice between crying and screaming, about the "air conditions," and the journey had not yet even begun. The woman was about forty-eight but still had long, straight black hair and bangs, as if it were the nineteen-sixties and she were twenty. "What is that terrible odor?" she was asking the driver in her hysterical voice. Other passengers joined the debate.

"It's food," one said. "People are eating lunch."

"It's something else, in addition to that—it's some kind of fumes!" she said.

People quickly skipped over what it was to how they could avoid this trip on the South Fork Bus. Two elderly gentlemen in suède jackets with fringes said that you could avoid Penn Station by taking a taxi over the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge to Hunter's Point, the place the Long Island Railroad started from—some barren, deadly yard in Queens where gangland shootouts and

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drug transactions probably took place.

Down in the dirty, gray Forties, the first-stop people seemed to be on the verge of awareness of the seriousness of the air problem, but before a rebellion could start, the bus stopped and the doors opened to let in the angry midtown line. Before things could settle down I heard sounds of a scuffle a few rows behind me. I heard punching sounds—maybe two men had started to punch each other. I didn't want to see. The reason for the fight turned out to be that one passenger didn't want a new passenger to sit next to him and said so. The new passenger, a dark-skinned man, took this to be a racial insult. The seated man explained that he needed two seats for himself because he was tall.

After the altercation was over I heard some swearing and heavy breathing, but I couldn't tell which was coming from which passenger. A light-skinned, sixty-year-old African-Spanish-American woman tried to keep the insulted man calm by turning back toward his seat and reciting outdated anti-racist slogans. After a while she turned around, and she and her own seatmate began chatting about other things.

The sun was beating into the bus on all sides—even though it was January, the temperature outside was about seventy degrees. By then we were near the exits of the hot, truck-packed Thirties, but this did not deter her from happily telling her seatmate that she had ordered up some Chinese food for lunch before the trip, and that her husband was a judge. I thought that ordering up Chinese food on a warm afternoon before a long bus ride was wrong. Then I imagined the sixty-five-year-old judge, probably a corrupt Housing Court judge, in his black robes downtown in his chambers with all the other corrupt judges. The judge's wife and her seatmate were becoming the best of friends, even though the seatmate was a rich-looking white woman, about five feet nine, wearing black toreador pants, ballet slippers, and eight or ten bracelets. As her bracelets clinked together she confessed that she had been a cruise-ship attendant—it sounded like a confession—and she had married an airline executive and they had a little boy, who'd been born when they lived in Senegal. When asked about the maternity treatment in Senegalese hospitals, she said, "It was fine. They have you hang from a tree by your wrists." I began to feel ill when I heard this, even though I knew that the use of gravity had to be better than the American method of lying on a table. It was the picture of the former cruise-ship attendant in labor, hanging from a tree—this picture plus the combination of the heat, the fumes, the Chinese lunch of the woman married to the judge presiding downtown in Housing Court. The Mozart in my earphones could not help me transcend this.

Every now and then the former cruise-ship attendant would laugh with inappropriate abandon. I decided that she must be drunk. In order to distract myself, I made a plan to ask Dr. Loquesto about the technique of childbirth she'd described, but on second thought I realized that it might enrage him. I'd once heard him yell at someone who asked his opinion of the birthing chair, "Great, the doctor has to sit on the floor in a raincoat!" Everything seemed worse when I remembered this.

"Hey, Al! What do you know about shelf life?"

IT was another muggy January day at the midtown location that same winter when I realized I could never again ride the South Fork Bus. It was Thursday afternoon and I was aiming for the bus that left East Seventy-third Street at one o'clock. Because of some kind of demonstration, there was the thick, slow, miserable kind of traffic on the way up Park Avenue. The taxi-driver suggested we go to the midtown stop. I said O.K., although I had a fear of midtown, and then we agreed that the only thing demonstrations ever accomplished was traffic.

I asked the midtown commandant where to get some coffee, even though I wanted tea, and he pointed me to a kind of hellhole combination stationery-and-coffee shop. In the hellhole I saw midtown individuals of every wretched sort, and stuffed animals of the poorest quality made, yet in the back, behind every other kind of thing a midtown person would want—for example, a cheap kind of foldup umbrella, a lavender rabbit, and the most dreaded candies and magazines known to man—there was a little Indian man whose job was dispensing coffee and tea. I was surprised to see a selection of herbal teas on a shelf behind him. I ordered a peppermint tea and a black coffee. I thought, I'll try the tea; if it doesn't help me feel any better, I'll try the coffee; if it makes me feel

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worse, I'll switch back to the tea.

Behind my small suitcase in the line for the South Fork Bus, fifteen more people had arrived during the ten minutes I was gone. These passengers were sick to see a long line on a January afternoon. A former débutante who I knew would be getting off at Southampton was behind me. She said that once it was so crowded she had to ask to sit next to someone. "I asked if I could sit there and the person said, 'No,' " she said.

"What reason did the person give?" I asked.

"No reason," she said. "Just 'no.' It took me a long time to get over that incident."

"I'd never get over it," I said. "I haven't had to ask and people haven't had to ask me yet," I said, picturing the three-hundred-pound man I saw once. No one asked to sit next to him, and after a while you had to feel sorry for him, since his great girth was obviously the reason. But as he settled into the trip and discovered that he knew the couple in front of him and began to tell them about his new life in Water Mill, you had to hate him. Because in his new life, although he was around fifty-five, his new wife and he had a one-year-old son named Jake, Josh, or Zack, and his wife and son watched the sun rise each day before she went for her three-mile run on the beach. A very typical description, I thought, as I heard him say his house was right on the beach and then ask the couple where their house was. They said their house was right on the highway. Now, that was a surprise. He didn't know what to say to that. This was as embarrassing to hear as hearing a couple say that their son was a pornography star or a follower of the Reverend Moon. There was nothing to say in reply. The couple didn't seem to mind that their house was on the highway. They took it lightly; it was their same house they'd had all these years. Maybe the highway was not so busy twenty years ago. Still, that was no excuse, and the couple and the three-hundred-pound man all knew it.

That trip, starting with the demonstration and the débutante, clinched it. I got on the bus, sipping my tea and coffee alternately, and found that neither one was helping. The seventh seat on the right was taken by what looked like a purple sweatshirt with a tough-looking woman inside. It was going to have to be the eighth, closer to the center accordion divider of the bus. This was the new, extra-large bus, which appeared to be two pieces of a bus joined together by a flimsy vinyl connector. In a crash, the back section would fly off and smash into everything—cars, trucks, trees. The front, at least, would still be steered by the driver, this time an angry-looking, red-faced thug who would probably have a seizure because of his poor physical condition, which I judged to be high blood pressure and arteriosclerosis.

"Well, my mommy kept her name."

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The débutante sat in the front with a friend who had gotten on uptown. Very quickly, I saw that someone was going to ask to sit next to me, because the new passengers, to their dismay, were having to sit with other passengers all over the bus. First they'd walk through the front section and through the accordion to the back, thinking that certainly there would be empty seats in the back. Then they'd come dejectedly back to the front and survey the choices. In front of me, in the seventh seat, a woman—the purple sweatshirt—with horribly bleached hair was asked by a man if the seat was occupied. I couldn't tell what she said, but he left and went to the back. I was studying what had gone wrong with the hair-dyeing process when a man came by and asked me if the seat next to me was occupied. I had to tell the truth, because if you lied to a decent specimen, a worse one would be coming by next. I should be flattered that this man has chosen me, I thought, because this man was perfect as men go. He was (1) clean—clean as a man can be. His hair was clean, his blue-jeans were clean, his boots were clean, his cotton socks were clean, his skin was clean and, as an added bonus, it was perfect skin, too. (2) He was only about forty. (3) He was wearing a wedding ring. (4) He had a book. He wasn't going to bother me.

Across the aisle from the purple sweatshirt, a most elegant man had sat down next to an elderly lady. The elegant man wore a perfect, lightweight gray flannel pin-striped suit, a blue striped shirt, and a blue striped tie. I wondered how the elegant man had just the right weight suit for this warm winter's day. He was an investment banker, I was sure, because these guys have all the right clothes no matter what else is wrong with them. One thing wrong with this man was his face. His face was too small, his features were too small for a man's face, but what could he do? He was a man. He couldn't get out of it. He wore black shoes—a mark against him—but at least they didn't have gold hardware. His hair was too long for his

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profession, and it was thin on top, but he didn't let this bother him, and he bravely combed it back the way he'd always combed it. He had a suntan on his small-featured face, but not too much of a suntan, and his hands were tan and smooth-looking, as if he'd never done anything with them but handle financial papers and cut a twig in his garden. This man was going to get off at Southampton. I imagined him in prep school. I imagined his whole privileged life of about forty-nine years and how he might have managed to keep his hands like that. Servants hammered and sawed things for him in Southampton, and superintendents and porters helped with things at home on Park Avenue.

Before we had even taken off I saw that the elegant man was talking in a cordial way to the purple sweatshirt. What could he have to say to her? He was not looking directly at her when I heard him say, "I keep mine out on the East End." I realized that he was smiling warmly at her dog, her dog that was the reason no one sat with her—her dog sat in the window seat, although dogs were not allowed on the South Fork Bus. He spoke directly to the dog, and, to my astonishment, he called the dog "pooch." "Hi, pooch," I believe he said. I couldn't tell what kind of dog it was. It looked a bit like the elegant man himself, with little tiny features on its little tiny face, but its face was a squashed, flat, light-brown fur thing, and his was not. The dog had big ears surrounding its tiny, bashed-in fur face, and the man's ears were normal-sized.

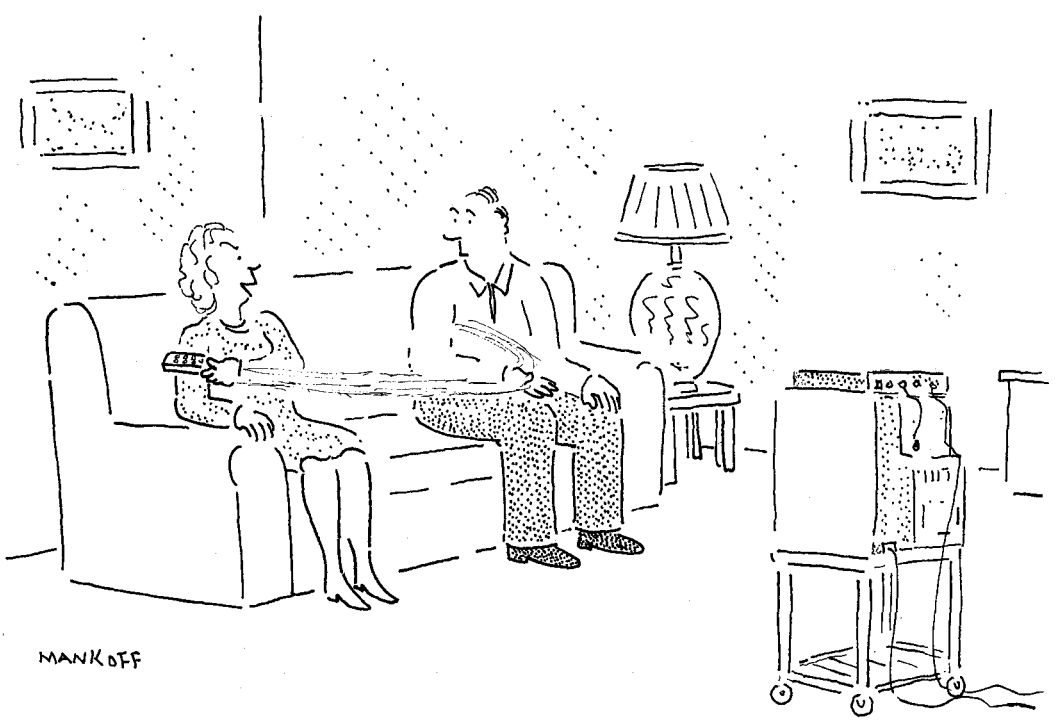
I saw that my seatmate was listening to his Walkman, a newer and more expensive model than mine, and that he was reading his book. There was no way to see what he was reading, but I saw that his hands were not only clean, they were beautiful. The more I stared at his hands, the more grateful I felt to have him sitting there. His long legs in those tight, but not too tight, clean, naturally faded bluejeans were not only good legs, they were great legs, but his hands were perfect hands, and suddenly I had the urge to grab one and kiss it.

Once we were out of the tunnel, I noticed that across the aisle the elegant man and the purple sweatshirt were exchanging newspapers—he had the *Wall Street Journal*, and the sweatshirt had the *Times*. They were friends now, just because of this dog. They were smiling at each other with each exchange of sections, and there were seven sections altogether. If they were in a Mozart opera, they might get up and dance a minuet. How could he like her so much just because she had this dog? It didn't seem possible, because he was so elegant and she was such a slob. He'd smile his courtly smile and she'd smile glowingly back even though she couldn't have been interested in him, since he was some kind of neuter man.

By the time we reached Manorville, I saw that the elegant man had stopped reading. He was becoming fidgety. When he saw that the bus was stopping at Manorville he got more fidgety. He mentioned to his seatmate, the elderly lady, that this was really too much, to have to stop at Manorville—the trip was taking four hours instead of two, the traffic was terrible, and now all these new stops.

Soon after Manorville he started to bite his nails. But he didn't manage to bite them. He would start, and then think better of it. Just a small nibble starting at the index finger and going across all the way. Then he began to run his hands through his hair. He'd run his hands through, and then he'd stop, and start to bite those nails again, but he never got into it. The hair, next the nails, and then he began with his ears. Rubbing his finger around the rim of his ear madly and almost poking it into the center of the ear. Then he'd look out the window and squirm around in his seat and start with his nails again. At one point he started to take a huge chomp out of all four fingers at once but reconsidered and stopped.

This elegant man is going to go crazy on this bus, I realized, and I had those few Xanax with me. This is what they were for, but I couldn't offer; he'd have to ask, and he would never ask. I became afraid of what would happen if he continued this way to Southampton. But he did continue. Look out the window, I tried to direct him by mental telepathy, which I didn't believe in. Look out at the beautiful country view, look at the landscape. See the sky, see the fields, see the trees, calm down, you are almost at your destination. But he would not calm down. The hair-running, the brink of nail-biting, the ear-rubbing; and then he added nose-rubbing to it—a quick flick across



"You'll get it back once you articulate a coherent viewing policy."

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each side of that tiny Pekinese nose was added to the routine. There was nothing left for him to do but put his face into his palms and rub his eyebrows and forehead upward in a final act of desperation—and then he did this, too.

I'm not going to watch anymore, I decided, even though the best view was out his window. I tried looking out the window next to my seatmate and saw to my alarm that the clean, beautiful-hand man was writing inside the cover of his book. I had no trouble seeing that he was keeping a diary, a moment-by-moment diary of his trip on the South Fork Bus. "3:04. This f——— bus!" it said. I looked at another section and saw that he was also writing about some failed relationship. I hoped it was not with a man. It appeared to be about his innermost feelings, feelings that I thought men did not wish to express, but here he was expressing them in a diary. When I saw a sentence that began, "So many feelings," I decided not to read on.

If I closed my eyes and concentrated on my sonata, either one of these two passengers could go berserk and I wouldn't see in time to escape. Neither one was calming down. The sweatshirt and her dog were asleep. The diarist put away the book and started taking deep breaths. I decided to speak. "We're not even at Southampton," I said to him, "and it's four o'clock."

"It's always late," he said, as if he might start to cry. "I hate this bus. At least . . . the train . . . I can walk around."

"Do the windows open?" I asked.

"No, but you can go to the end of the car and get some air," he said.

Finally, at Southampton, the elegant man suddenly turned calm and polite; he was helping the elderly lady on with her coat. People knew him. They were all getting off together, shaking their heads in disgust.

"Where are you getting off?" I asked the diarist.

"East Hampton," he said. "I can walk home. I live on Further Lane."

I could see that he was used to having people gasp when he said the name of his street, because this clean, half-crazed man lived on the most beautiful and expensive lane in East Hampton. The elegant, more crazed man must have lived on the most beautiful lane in Southampton—Pond Lane, or one of those Neck Lane roads.

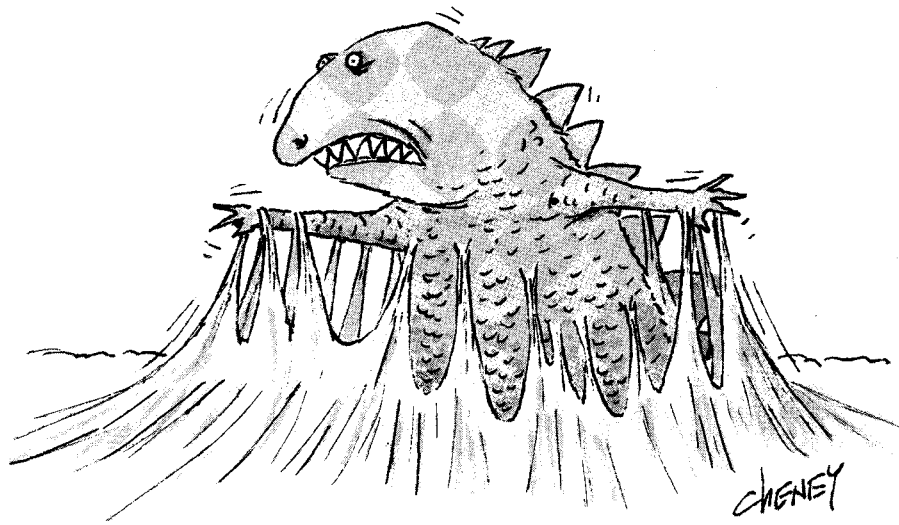
Even though it had started to rain by the time we got to East Hampton, I knew that these two men would change their clothes and go out running. I couldn't run, but I could walk so fast it would be just as good for the heart.

On my walk I'd try to think of a new means of transportation. I'd heard that people hired retired policemen to drive them back and forth. It was only four times the price of the bus. I knew a young man who had gone to police school but flunked out because of his mistakes in choosing his uniform. The police hat he'd purchased was too large and kept falling over his eyes, and his shoes were too small to chase petty criminals in. Maybe his rates would be lower.

I could get a part-time job to pay the flunked-out police trainee his cut-rate price. I had no skills for the real world and didn't know anyone gainfully employed except for the flower arranger and a macrobiotic chef. I could ask them if they needed any help. I could work arranging flowers by day and cooking brown rice at night. If only I'd shared those Xanax with the flower arranger, but drugs had become so hard to get. Dr. Loquesto had once given me a prescription for one Demerol for a medical test. The flower arranger had told me that his dog knocked over a bottle containing his last few pills and then tried to lick them up. The flower arranger had to scramble around the floor trying to salvage the licked pills for himself.

I'd always listened attentively to his floral techniques. "First, I mossed up the table, then I strewed calla lilies in wet Oasis—you know, the green foam Oasis?—then I draped ivy. . . ." People preferred live flower arrangements to photographs of flowers in decline. I had to accept this. While we worked on arrangements, we could talk about flowers and pills and herbal remedies. The medium-strength Xanax was a pale-peach color, the same shade as the Apricot Beauty tulip we both admired. The mild strength was white, like a White Emperor tulip. An even higher strength was light purple, my haircutter, Francine, had told me. "They're for extreme cases," she explained. I pictured a lilac and a freesia. Valerian root could induce calm and sleep. Echinacea drops had antibiotic properties and came from the coneflower.

I'd have to hear the word "moss" turned into a verb. Dr. Loquesto didn't mind hearing the word "laser" conjugated as a verb. I minded, but in my new job I wouldn't even have the authority to say " 'Moss' is not a verb." Still, if I could learn to moss up tables and strew calla lilies in wet Oasis, maybe I could earn enough to hire the flunked-out trainee with the big hat to drive me back and forth. That was my plan. —Julie Hecht



GODZILLA MEETS MOZZARELLA

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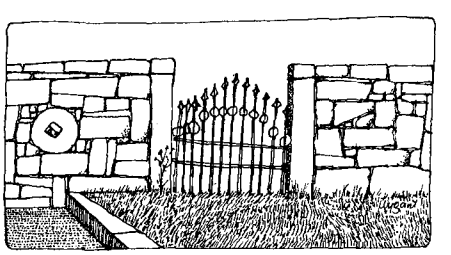
ANNALS OF THE ANTIQUITIES TRADE

THE ANGEL ON HER SHOULDER—II

THE Hotel des Indes in The Hague is a charming glass-domed palace, a relic of the last century. Approaching it in a taxicab one afternoon in the spring of 1991, I saw two highly theatrical figures on the steps leading up to its ornate portal. One wore the uniform of a field marshal circa 1890—he, I figured, was the doorman—and the other wore the costume of an art dealer from some voguish New York hangout of the late sixties, like Max's Kansas City. It was hard to tell who wore more gold: the doorman had his gold buttons and braid and epaulets, but the art-dealer person had his own gold buttons, and a gold tie clasp and some other gold jewelry, all very brilliant. He had a Liberty hankie flying from his breast pocket. He had a generously cut double-breasted jacket striped in several colors, a bright-yellow figured tie, a blue-and-white striped shirt with flashing white collar and cuffs, pink suspenders, a great schoolboy shock of brown hair, and the sort of thick, flamboyant mustache that is de rigueur in certain lagoons of the art trade. The doorman leaped forward to open the cab door while I shuffled a blur of unfamiliar Dutch banknotes and tried to avoid looking at Michel van Rijn. Later, when we got to know each other, Michel reproached me for this brief moment of avoidance in greeting him, but the truth was that he had given me a jolt. In photographs I had seen, he appeared as a handsome, powerfully built man in beautiful soft English clothes, the eyes hypnotic, Svengali-like, and whereas I could see that he had once looked like this he had changed a great deal. He had become stout, and his face looked puffy. His bangs had grown long and swept down over one eye like a protective screen, leaving the other, naked eye to fend for itself. This eye now trained itself upon me, expectant, welcoming, but also measuring and doubting.

Michel loved attention. He loved journalists, and they were often in attendance. No one could accuse him of not being good copy: your rendezvous with Michel might begin with a trip to some exotic city, a wait in the gilded lobby of some grand hotel, a fast drive in a long black car to a secret luxury flat, where his stunning girlfriend—his girlfriend for *that* city, *that* week—would be throwing a soirée for a heterogeneous crowd of circus folk, bookmakers, industrialists, fashionable chefs, girls in silk tops wearing Opium, smooth-mannered young men of uncertain métier. And after a time Michel would make his appearance, irresistibly charming and generous. With some reason, he fancied himself a born storyteller, and as other rich men keep a houseboy or a valet he kept a Cambridge-educated writer, a sort of Boswell, on lease; this writer would follow him about, all over the world, recording his escapades and his bons mots. The upshot was a big volume of ghostwritten memoirs, which, though they were not yet published, had already been read by a great many people, and of which I possessed a racy digest.

Michel was a major figure in the Kanakaria mosaics case, which had been tried by an Indianapolis court in May, 1989. In this landmark suit for the recovery of missing cultural property, the Church of Cyprus had regained possession of four ancient Christian mosaics purchased by the Indiana art dealer Peg Goldberg from a mysterious Turk a year earlier. Michel had been the main broker in the transaction. He hadn't testified at the trial, but I had obtained his telephone number and called him up. Then, without ever having seen me, he had got into the habit of placing transatlantic calls to me at least once a week, to offer breathless, rapid-fire information about smuggling from Argentina, or the wickedness of the great auction houses, or the Cypriots' efforts to recover their purloined art. After a while, I called up Scotland Yard to find out if this single human being could really have his finger in an infinity of pies. "He's one of the top men in his line," a detective said, in a tone of grudging admiration. "He has a hand in a lot of the world's art-smuggling jobs, and he'd be very happy to claim he had a hand in all of them."



On our first afternoon together, we walked about The Hague, as we would do each day for the better part of a week. Carrying a portable phone to keep in touch with the worldwide art bazaar, Michel lumbered resolutely and unceasingly forward, along winding canals and over arched footbridges. He spoke of sparkling deals in such intimate detail that I was almost embarrassed; since I hardly knew him, this uncalled-for familiarity made me feel as if his voice had turned on automatically, triggered by a sensory mechanism that could detect a human presence. He bought and sold toys now, he bought and sold paintings, music boxes, mechanical organs, steam calliopes, architectural fragments, Old Master drawings—what didn't he buy and sell?

After taking me on an hour's forced march through the Hague, Michel started talking about the Kanakaria case. The sale to Peg had been a piece of cake, he recalled. "She had that letter offering three million pounds, and I certainly wasn't going to let her get away without selling her something!" He flashed an incisory smile.

"How much did she know about the pieces?" I asked.

"She knew exactly what they were," he said.

It was a cleverly ambiguous reply. When I pressed him to explain himself, he said, "I gave her a copy of the book"—the 1977 monograph issued by the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, in Washington, D.C., in which the mosaics that Peg had bought, and their companion pieces, had been published. At the trial, Peg had denied having seen the monograph until well after her purchase of the mosaics, so the two were nose to nose on this point, as on so much else.

In the beginning, Michel said, Peg had fully grasped the riskiness of the venture, but then, progressively forget-

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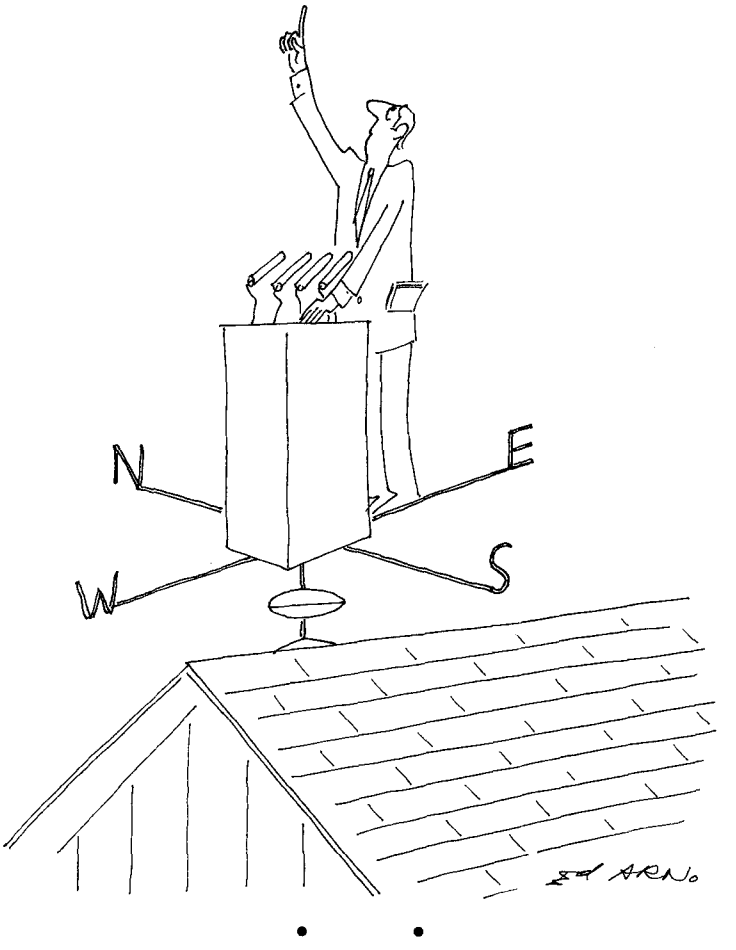
ting that the holy merchandise had to be disposed of quietly and discreetly, she had started listening to the art-market experts and had ended up asking twenty million dollars for the four pieces, including the Archangel she so desperately loved. Her ambition had made her forget, Michel said: she refused to know what she knew. "The trouble with Peg is that she wants to be taken as this woman with a heart of gold, living in a house full of rescued cats," he said. "But that is not at all who she is. It's a mask."



Michel had barely launched into his account of the mosaics episode before he dropped it and went on to something else. He began singing the praises of the two most celebrated icon panels that he had ever sold: a St. Peter now in the British Museum and another St. Peter at Dumbarton Oaks. It seemed that the Turk, whose name was Aydin Dikmen, had sold him the former, saying that it had come from a monastery in northern Cyprus, and Michel had passed it on to the London restorer Stavros Mihalarias, who had cleaned it and sold it to the museum for a glorious hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. The Dumbarton Oaks St. Peter, which Michel called "the crown of my Cyprus collection," had been a more complicated business. "I used to get things from a Greek thief, a very poor and very brave man, who would spend months making plans to steal icons from Greek monasteries," he said. "He showed that one to me in Munich, and even the old wood was lovely, exquisite to the touch. I asked him if I could sleep with it in my room for a night—one must sleep with the things that one loves, no?—and so I was able to open my eyes and see it first thing next morning." Michel told me he had lost the panel in a debt settlement, and it had gone to a Dutch businessman, who had advertised it in Los Angeles; eventually it came to Dumbarton Oaks' attention, and the museum—unaware that it was stolen—had arranged to buy it.

That afternoon, it was drizzling. We looked at the rain-blurred ducks in the canals, we went in and out of damp little shops, and everywhere everyone hailed Michel. He was on the warmest terms with the whole town. Soon it grew dark, and he suggested that we "go through the courtesies," as he put it, and get drunk together.

No matter how much I drink, I cannot get drunk—my mind goes blank, and I stare numbly ahead—but I saw no harm in joining him for a few rounds of geneva and fresh green herring. It began to pour, and we sat down in a pub overlooking a canal and contemplated the sheets of rain marching over the footbridge beside us. I have only the dimmest memory of the evening that followed: quantities of intoxicants, pubs, tables, streets, footbridges, gables jumping in and out of the shadows; we had dinner and wine, and a pretty girl was conjured out of nowhere to show me a black dossier, rather thick, bearing my own name. Everyone we met—and we met many people—was a great friend of Michel's, and several times, on the crest of various bridges, I heard references to the mosaics, and the names Peg Goldberg and Judge Noland, followed by screams of laughter. Wherever we went, we were followed by a gigantic chauffeur in a slowly moving car, and it was thanks to this personage that I returned, much ravaged, to my hotel in Amsterdam.

Michel entrusted me with a complete copy of his memoirs, and over the next few days I read them. They recounted, at a headlong pace, his initiation as a teen-ager into the Levantine icon trade, his early purchases in Soviet Armenia, his prankish bulk sales of "Mothers of God" to uninformed Japanese, his expansion into the illicit Cypriot antiquities traffic. The memoirs also told of Michel's first meeting, in the seventies, with Aydin Dikmen, who had recently moved to Munich; of Dikmen's lofty claim to be rescuing Cypriot church treasures from looters and vandals; and of some dark dispute between Michel and the Turk over an option to dispose of the Lysi frescoes, which the Menil Foundation, in Houston, had later purchased on Cyprus's behalf. Was all of it true, or some of it, or none of it? Checking some episodes against information I already possessed, I found them partly confirmable. But key assertions hung on hearsay, or rumor, or the recollection of long-past events, or (so it seemed to me) a farceur's feeling for story line.

"Michel," I said to him one day, "in your book you've revealed an awful lot about your illicit deals. I suppose that by your standards this information is already a little old, and perhaps known to hundreds of people, but, still, what effect will all this have on your reputation?"

He smiled boyishly. "The effect will be devastating," he said.

"What will you do?"

"I'll choose a new identity, a new address. I'll use other faces. One is

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BLUNT MORNING

It's almost unbearable to remember
so I scarcely ever think about it anymore,

that last summer morning when my mother-in-law floated
in a netherworld of morphine-induced sleep,

those lingering hours of an otherwise ordinary Sunday
when she entered into a country that wasn't sleep

so much as a blue comatose state of semi-
consciousness that she inhabited to avoid the pain.

All that blunt sunlit morning we signalled each other
and talked over and around her emaciated shape

propped up on the pillows for what were obviously
her final hours of life on this earth.

She was breathing heavily, she was laboring
in her non-sleep, in her state of drifting

to wherever it was she was going—and suddenly
I couldn't stand it any longer. I moved next to her

and began talking, I didn't ask any questions,
I didn't know what I was saying I was speaking so quickly.

I said that we were all there, all of us, Janet and Sophie
and Susan, who was playing the piano in the living room,

that we loved her intensely, fiercely,
that we missed her *already*—where *was* she?—

we wished we could *do* something, anything,
that we each have tasks to fulfill on this planet

and her job now was to die, which she was doing
so well, so courageously, so gracefully,

we were just amazed at her courage.
I know she could hear me—

and that's when she opened her eyes and fixed me
with her stare. She wasn't moving

but she was looking me precisely in the eyes.
I'll never forget that look—haunted, inquisitive, regal—

and she was speaking,
except her voice was too weak

and the sounds didn't rise beyond her throat,
but she was speaking,

and that's when Janet and Sophie started singing
Hebrew songs—not prayers or psalms but celebratory

songs from Gertrude's childhood in Detroit,
and she was singing, too, she remembered the words,

except we couldn't hear any words, nothing
was coming out of her mouth, but she was tapping

two fingers on the side of the rented hospital bed—
and her lips were moving, she was singing.

That's when Sophie started telling stories
about their childhood, which seemed so far away

and so near, like yesterday, and Gertrude was nodding,
except her head didn't move, but anyone

could see that she was nodding yes,
and then Janet started talking about *her* childhood

in this very room
where sunlight burned through the curtains,

and then suddenly Gertrude jolted forward
and started waving her arms—

What is it? What is it? What is it?—
because she was choking on her own phlegm

and then she fell back against her pillows,
and stopped breathing.

—Edward Hirsch

• •

always a little bit the *comédien*, yes?"

That day, as usual, we went for a stroll in The Hague, and at length we came to the park behind Queen Beatrix's palace. Michel pointed out some squarish objects suspended high in the trees above us: they were electronic sensors positioned there to detect prowlers in the neighborhood. Two years earlier, the palace's security measures had proved a blessing to him, he said, because he had taken a suite in the ParkHotel, right over there beyond the trees, so that he need not be afraid of snipers.

Why snipers? Well, that was a long and complicated business. According to Michel, an underworld figure named Max had made threats against him, and consequently he had enlisted the aid of three bodyguards, called here Marko, Draža, and Hans, who ran a protection racket. But the three brought

problems of their own. They weren't satisfied with his payoffs, he said—they were trying to extort more money than he had—and so, in desperation, he sold them cut-rate shares in the resale value of one of the Kanakaria mosaics, the so-called Hand of Mary and Feet of Christ, which he had obtained from Dikmen. They then moved into his suite, to make sure that he didn't abscond with the treasure. So there he was, a prisoner in his own abode, hanging on to the Feet of Christ for dear life. And in the midst of all this, he said, Dikmen, who was furi-

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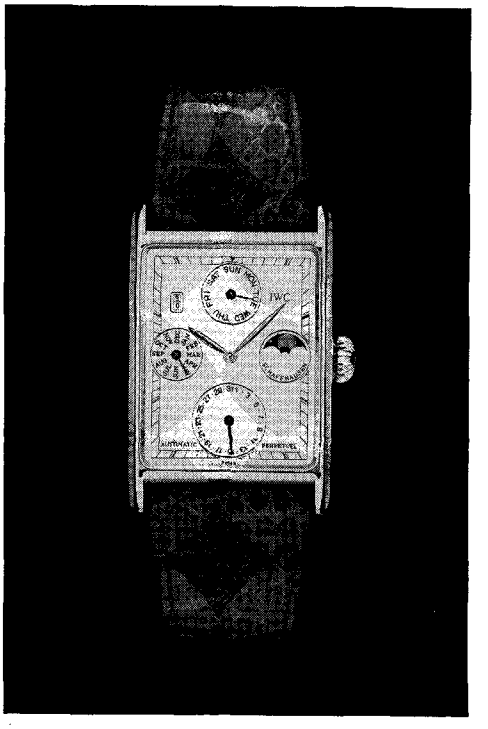

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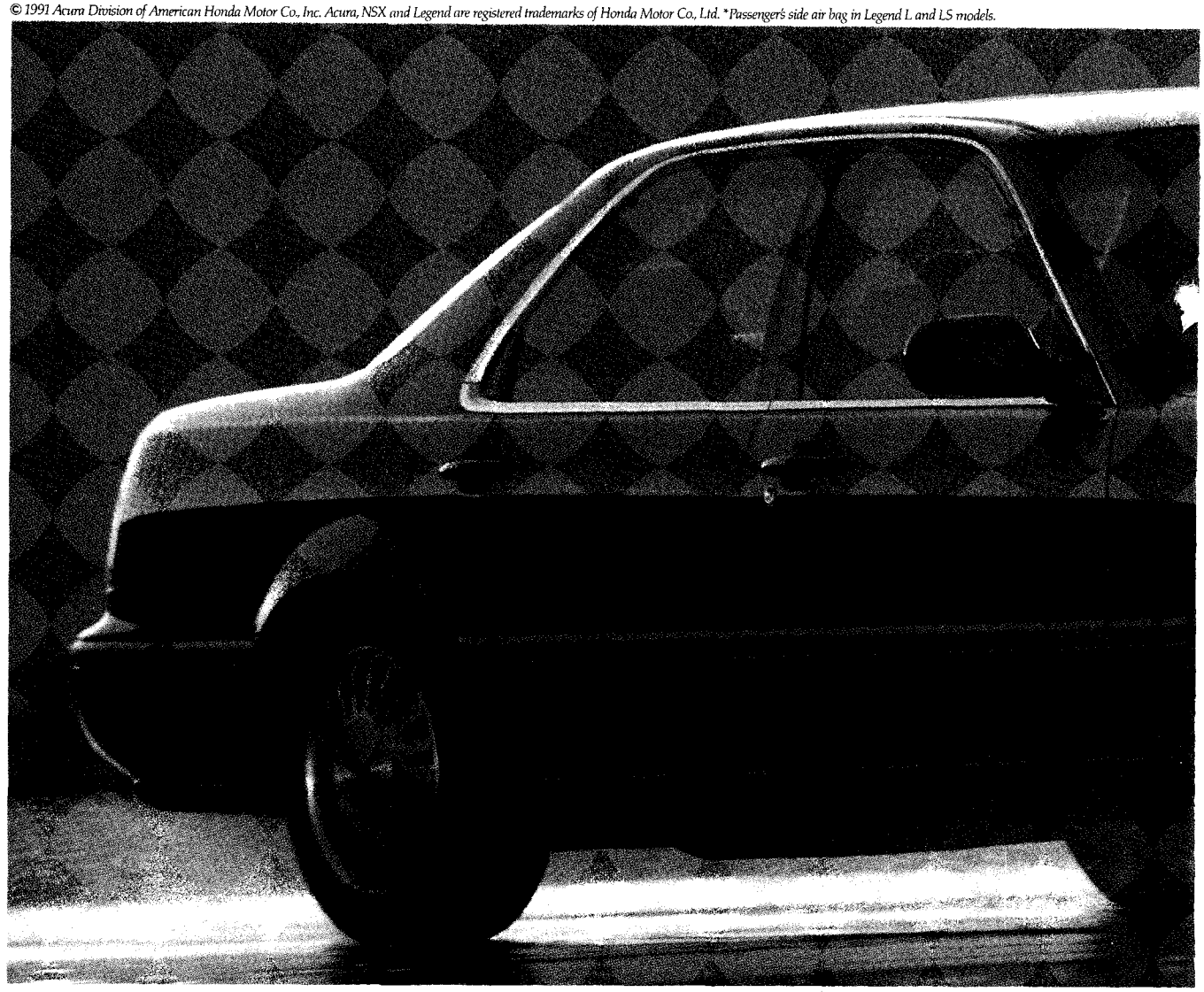

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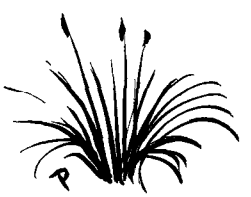
ous at him for raking so much off the proceeds of the sale to Peg and also for revealing Dikmen's name to Geraldine Norman, the art-market correspondent for the London *Independent*, put a hired assassin on his case. The killer was called something like "Dujan"—all the Yugoslav hoodlums in Holland went by single code names, Michel said. So, by degrees, life lost its sweetness for Michel, what with Max, Marko, Draža, Hans, and Dujan all persecuting him, and in August of 1989 he just skipped out and caught a plane to Curaçao.

Before leaving, however, he tried to patch things up with Dikmen, through the mediation of yet another Yugoslav, who went by the code name of Benjamin, though his real name was Savo Kujundzic. Dikmen had sent this Savo character to Holland to threaten him, Michel said; Michel considered Savo dangerous, but he decided to enlist him as a go-between. The nature of Savo's connection to Dikmen was unclear to Michel, but Savo, too, was based in Munich, and Michel believed that he had connections to the mob.



Michel told me a flashy anecdote about Savo. One day, Savo notified him that he was taking a certain train from Munich to Amsterdam, with the aim of smuggling an Impressionist painting into Holland. Michel found his candor appallingly stupid—"I mean, if I tell you I am coming from Munich, then really I will come from Vienna"—but then Savo did not strike him as particularly bright. On the train, Michel said, Savo hid his painting in the place where chumps always hid their goods—behind a ceiling panel over a toilet—and there two of Michel's people, disguised as customs officials, found it and confiscated it. The painting wasn't Savo's—it apparently belonged to a bigger cheese—and Savo, terrified of going back to the owner empty-handed, had come as a supplicant to Michel. "I gave him back the piece," Michel said, "but I made him sweat first."

We had left the park by now and arrived in front of a little restaurant named De Haagsche Traiteur; we seated ourselves upstairs beside a window looking down over a narrow street with an art gallery and a china shop. Michel talked and laughed with the owner, who vanished for a moment and returned bearing bowls of lobster bisque. When we had finished the soup, I said to Michel, "Do you know who has the remaining mosaics?"

"Absolutely," he replied. "Aydin has them. Savo's fronting for him, but Aydin has them. Aydin has many storages, in the most funny parts of Munich—places where you would never expect him to have millions and millions of dollars' worth of pieces: little apartments, et cetera. He builds fake walls, which is fantastically clever, so if you are in one of the apartments you will never expect that there are treasures."

I asked Michel if he knew how the London art dealer Yanni Petsopoulos had managed to arrange the return of two of the Kanakaria mosaics—Sts. Jude and Bartholomew—to Cyprus in 1984. He replied that when the Menil Foundation bought the Lysi frescoes from Aydin Dikmen they had put the money in an escrow account. "And then, you see, Petsopoulos said, 'The money's in the account, and you can get it whenever Cyprus and the Menil start to feel comfortable. And for them to feel comfortable, I'd like to have from you the mosaics, and I will hand the mosaics to the right people in the right place.' Well, Aydin, he's crazy for money—oh, oh, this one million dollars in his escrow account!" And so, Michel said, Petsopoulos had pressed Dikmen to deliver the mosaics into the custody of Constantine Leventis, Cyprus's Ambassador to UNESCO. "But Aydin, not being an idiot, kept the good pieces—including the Feet of Christ, which is now here in Holland with the Yugoslavs."

"Oh, so they still have the Feet?"

"Yes, they still have that—the Draža and Marko group. Savo makes himself a little bit presentable, but if you see Draža and Marko, they are not presentable, they're really absolutely—" Michel made a gesture of dismissal. "They *cannot* deal, so I'm sure they will try to find a way for Savo to sell it. But it's a pity, because the pieces should all be reunited. Cyprus cannot officially make them an offer, because if, as a government, Cyprus starts dealing, where is the end?"

All this time, Michel's portable phone had been lying beside him on the windowsill. Now it began to buzz, and he clicked it on. At first, there seemed to be some trouble on the line, but then Michel's face took on a radiant expression. "Bob!" he exclaimed. "How are you?" He winked at me and jerked up his eyebrows. I realized that he was talking to Bob Fitzgerald, who had helped him broker the mosaics to Peg. "I'm sitting with some people," Michel said—that apparently meant me—"but I can talk for a moment."

They chatted enthusiastically about several deals—there was a reference to a Cézanne watercolor—and then Michel hung up, flushed with excitement. He ordered fish for us and recounted some practical jokes he had once played on Bob. "I love it when I outsmart him," he said. "That is the fight always between us. I mean, we love each other, but we fight each other from the moment I am in business with him. When I've *got* him, I really enjoy it, and he must be something like a sadomasochist, because he loves it also—because he accepts and respects it."

"Bob likes to talk about his great losses as well as his great victories," I said.

"Yes, well, we've lost lots of money and we've made lots of money," said Michel, his voice dwindling awkwardly. And then, all at once, his face suffered a galvanic change of expression, from cheerfully roguish to troubled, almost anguished. "I don't know when you spoke to him," he said. "If it was when I was fighting with him—" He broke off, pained, I supposed, by the memory of the fistfight and the mutually inflicted black eyes that Bob had told me about. "Well, I won't ask you what he says about me, because I know what he thinks about me."

"He's annoyed at you," I said. "At least, he was a month ago."

Ever since I became interested in the mosaics affair, I had been listening to people talk about money: prices, markups, commissions, contingency fees. Each time lucre changed hands, there was a shift of psychic position, a scramble for dominance, but in the telling the numbers grew sad and the details lost their glitter. Now I leaned forward and looked hopefully at Michel, thinking that he was going to talk to me about something else—about his great friendship with Bob, an attachment that was apparently composed of equal parts sibling struggle and boyish rascality. But Michel averted his gaze and made a huddle of his fingers on the table. When, at length, I engaged

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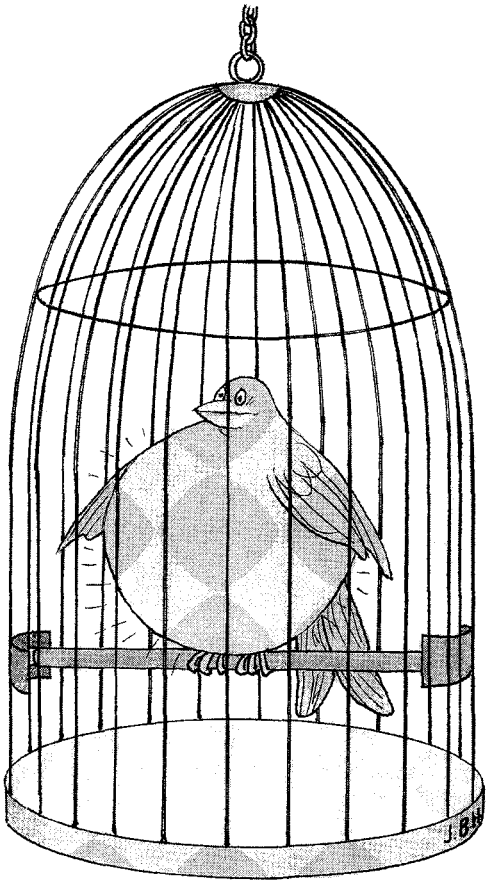
his attention, he began speaking of something else. He did not again touch upon his friendship with Bob, and when the time came for me to say goodbye to him it was this that I regretted the most.

THESE days, Savo Kujundzic, who, among his other missions, had come to Indianapolis on Peg's behalf and testified that certain Cypriots had been in collusion with Aydin Dikmen, was apparently spending a lot of time at an office he had opened in Vienna. Now and then, I would ring his number and ask for Mr. Kujundzic, but my request was always met with a leisurely stream of Russian, a language I do not understand. It was my invariable impression that I was being mistaken for someone else, and only after I insisted that I knew no Russian would the voice, which was affable and male, pursue its explanations in English. This English, refined but hesitant, was heavily accented, as if learned by a person who, though very keen to know the language, had never lived anyplace where it is spoken. "Savwo is not khere," the voice would say, and then volunteer the news that he was away in Belgrade, or Munich, or Moscow. "I know nothing of this question you khave for Savwo, but I know that he is expyecting you."

Passing through Manchester on unrelated business one afternoon that summer—it was a few weeks after I first called Savo's office—I impulsively hopped a plane to Vienna, caught a cab into the city, and took a room opposite the Staatsoper. Dusk was falling over the linden alleys and the flickering streetcars and the hurrying people in their opera clothes. In the lingering blue light, I sat down in the embrasure of the window and called Savo's engineering firm, G. & R. Handelsgesellschaft. A brisk, efficient-sounding woman answered, and told me in good English to hold the line. I caught a gabbling sound, as if multitudes were conversing in the background. After a longish moment, a surprisingly friendly voice greeted me: Savo's tone had a Montenegrin forthrightness, with its hint of bravado, and also a Montenegrin nasality—an unexpected timbre for so deep a voice. In a few words he informed me that he was busy, that his offices were filled with the members of a Russian trade delegation, and that he would call back in an hour or so; then we could meet and talk and perhaps share a meal. He hung up. Two hours passed, and it grew dark out, but still Savo did not call, and I rang his number again. This time, he himself answered, and told me that he was still tied up with the visiting Russians—but he would try to call the next day, or perhaps the day after.

The following morning, I was awakened from a deep sleep by the trilling of the phone: it was Savo, who summoned me to an address near the Südbahnhof. I called a cab, which headed south until it was crawling through a maze of mean streets fronted by long, barrackslike buildings of the sort that commonly house dispatch offices, transshipment agencies, freight-insurance brokers—all the bewildering bureaucracy of goods transportation. Not a soul was in sight. At length, the cab stopped before a large frosted-glass door, beside which was a plaque bearing the name of Savo's company. I stepped out into the heavy, almost breathable silence of the street and rang the doorbell.



The Cat That Swallowed the... no, it was the other way round.

As I stood waiting for the door to open, some phrases from the sworn statement Savo had made to Peg's lawyer in Indianapolis drifted back into my mind. He had spoken of Aydin Dikmen's horror and distress at the "fairy tale" told by Yanni Petsopoulos and retold by Walter Hopps, the Menil's curator of contemporary art, in his pretrial deposition. Dikmen had raged against Hopps in his Munich apartment, calling him "miserable Popps"; he had never had any mosaic roundel hanging over his red sofa, he said, and nobody had ever smashed a decanter in his fireplace. Savo declared himself appalled by this story. "Petsopoulos can tell this to his mother," he said, "but not to someone seriously considering this." Savo had also said that during trips he made on Peg's behalf in May of 1990 to Istanbul and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus he met with two men—a certain Ahmet Aziz and a certain Mehmet—and they had verified, with documents, the extent of Cypriot officialdom's collusion with Dikmen. The remarkable thing about Savo was that he, unlike all the others, wished, as he had put it, "to help the lady." But why? Why did he wish to help her? There were so many whys in this affair.

The person who opened the door to me was a smiling woman of middle age, who introduced herself as Maria and led me upstairs to a large, bare office with walls of roughcast plaster. There were, I noticed, no drafting tables or engineers' instruments. At the far side of a long, empty table sat a man with a squarish face and dark eyes, who puffed furiously on a cigarette. The eyes were wistful and a little evasive. "Hello, I am Grisha," he said.

I introduced myself and asked where he was from.

"I am from Moscow," he said, puffing. I recognized his voice as that of the man who usually answered the phone; Maria was clearly the efficient-sounding woman I had spoken to the day before.

"I do not know anything of why you have come," she said.

"I also do not know," said Grisha.

And then I became aware that a very large man was standing in front of me, holding out a very

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large hand, and no one who knew what a Montenegrin looked like could have doubted for a moment that he was one. Savo's hair was thick and black; his eyes peered from under dense, nearly meeting eyebrows; and his jutting jaw and somewhat skewed nose, which gave his face the look of being slightly pushed in at the center, inevitably suggested a boxer. He was casually dressed, in slacks and a polo shirt, but his bearing was vaguely military. His demeanor, as he showed me into an adjoining office, disclosed no anxiety about the implications of our meeting. He seemed a product of centuries of martial breeding, and only some interesting quirk of character, I felt, could have landed him in this office beside a railroad and not in the mountains of his South Slav homeland.

Besides his native Serbian, Savo spoke fluent Russian and German and some French; he had also taught himself a rudimentary English, which he regarded as undependable. As for me, I understand German fairly well but do not speak it. For these reasons, Savo decided to use German and I to use English, while Maria would stand by as interpreter, ready to elucidate any phrase that might puzzle either one of us. We sat down opposite each other. It was important, he said, with a look of weary contempt playing across his face, to understand the Cypriot cast of mind, and, above all, to understand the Cypriot involvement with shadow plays. The Greeks had invented this art form in ancient times, and they had been living in their shadow-play world for many centuries. If at one time they had had a great culture, now all that culture was gone—gone except for "the shadow plays and the lies."

I began to object to this generalization, but Savo swept my words away with a peremptory gesture. He could not understand, he said, why no American official could grasp what "every bird in Europe" knew: the reason that nobody wanted to talk about the Kanakaria affair was that nobody wanted to be enmeshed in it. This, he insisted, was especially true of Dominique de Menil and Walter Hopps, because of the peculiar manner in which they had acquired the Lysi frescoes. As for Dr. Vassos Karageorghis, the Republic of Cyprus's former Director of Antiquities, the reason he hadn't come to testify in Indianapolis, Savo said, was that during the period of the Turkish enclaves he had commissioned Aydin Dikmen to go around photographing Byzantine churches inaccessible to the Greek Cypriot authorities. Karageorghis could deny this if he wished (I was aware, in point of fact, that he did deny it), but Savo insisted that "everybody in Cyprus" knew about it. As for Yanni Petsopoulos, he had traded with Aydin, and had taken many things on consignment from Aydin to sell in London. Savo recalled what he had said in his sworn statement in Indianapolis: that after the trial, when Aydin discovered that Petsopoulos had told Hopps a story that did not reflect well on Dikmen, Dikmen said to Savo "Get my goods out!" and Savo recovered a number of antiquities from Petsopoulos, in August or September of 1989. So, said Savo, what was all the nonsense about Petsopoulos's "rescuing" Cypriot art from Aydin? They did business with each other all the time!

I had no doubt that Petsopoulos would strongly dispute this contention. For the moment, however, I merely took notes, glancing at Maria whenever I was uncertain of the meaning of some German expression. She was sitting beside me, scribbling on a pad, her expression that of a person detained on meaningless business. I could see her in my peripheral vision—a blur of red lipstick and a flutter of glossy dark hair.

Then Savo began to explain how he had come to be involved in this intrigue. He claimed that he had no monetary interest at stake—that his actions were based purely on his friendship with Aydin. Aydin was anguished; he felt that he could not help himself by anything he might say in a courtroom. Aydin was not a self-confident man, and he was also a Turk, with the Turkish secretiveness, but if he had come to the trial he could have destroyed the Cypriot case in five minutes.

Savo's tone was even, matter-of-fact, grenade-launcher-manual, as if he hadn't the slightest doubt of the truth of what he was saying, or much interest, really, in what I might make of it. He stopped to light a cigarette, and pressed on. He said that Michel van Rijn had first offered to Cypriot agents the four mosaics eventually sold to Peg, but that the agents had balked at the price. Then, just a few days after the sale to Peg, Savo said, three Cypriots had turned up at Michel's hotel in The Hague, boiling with rage. Savo found out about this through two men he had known since childhood—Michel's bodyguards Marko and Draža. The Cypriots confronted Michel, and Michel said to them, in so many words, "Yes, I sold the mosaics to Peg, but I can get them back for you—only now the price is three million dollars." Michel had also persuaded Marko, Draža, and Hans to lend him money against the sale of the Hand of Mary and Feet of Christ, and had promised each of them two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in return—although it would take a little while, he had pointed out, for the sale to go through. "Michel had no money," Savo said. "He just eats up money, so he borrowed from Marko, Draža, and Hans—the poor kids were actually *supporting* him."

It was odd, I thought, the way all these errant lives led back to each other in the end, like balls in a pinball machine. "Savo, how can it be that your two childhood friends Marko and Draža *just happened* to wind up as Michel's bodyguards?" I asked. "Isn't that a pretty odd coincidence?"

Savo seemed not to understand my question, for he didn't answer it.

"Savo," said Maria, in German, "what this man wants to know is how, out of all the Yugoslavs in the world, you happen to know these two—the bodyguards of this person called Michel."

Now Savo understood, and he nodded gravely. "Marko and Draža are Montenegrins," he said, in English, throwing me a level glance. "Montenegro is small country. To Europe come wery few Montenegrins. Every Montenegrin man know every other Montenegrin man."

I said, "What are Marko's and Draža's last names—their surnames? Do you know?"

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He laughed, but there was severity in his laughter. "They are not like you and me," he said. "They live in different world, primitive world. No last names."

There came a knock at the door, and Savo was temporarily called from his office. I seized the opportunity to talk to Maria. "Where are you from, Maria, originally?" I asked.

"From many countries, from everywhere," she replied, a little sadly, "although now I am Viennese."

"And what is your position in this firm?"

"I am an engineering consultant," she said, handing me a business card that read "Maria Salzmann, Konsulentin."

"What field of engineering do you specialize in?" I persisted, feeling that, one way or another, her reply was sure to disclose something interesting about Savo's occupation.

"Avalanche forecasting," she said offhandedly.

Savo reëntered the room, smiling broadly at us—a generous, Mediterranean smile. He obviously didn't care if I quizzed Maria. He didn't care what Maria told me. Then he started to tell me about Aydin Dikmen—something about a rich Istanbul family, large inherited properties, a passion for historical preservation, the restoration of whole districts of the city. Besides a museumlike villa outside the Turkish city of Konya, he said, Aydin had acres of space in Munich, but was attached to his small flat on the Schützenstrasse, which his wife and child also preferred. One of Aydin's problems, Savo went on, came from the fact that Peg had refused to give Michel control over the marketing of the mosaics, whereupon Michel, out of pique, had summoned Geraldine Norman, of the *Independent*, to The Hague and had shown her an old document signed by Aydin (it was an option agreement) which proved that he had had possession of the four Kanakaria mosaics sold to Peg. In addition, there was his name on the fully executed bill of sale to Peg, which Aydin had foolishly signed when it was half blank, Savo said, before the price and the name of the buyer had been filled in.

"Savo, hold on," I protested, put off by what seemed a chain of melodramatic plot devices. "Do you mean to tell me that your friend Aydin Dikmen actually signed a contract that was only partly completed?"

"Yes, absolutely," said Savo. He insisted that Aydin had thought all along that the mosaics would go to Constantine Leventis—just as had happened in 1984—and, through him, back to Cyprus; Aydin and Leventis had already discussed this once, in Frankfurt, Savo said, but hadn't agreed on the price. At that time, Aydin had asked ninety thousand Deutsche marks—or about forty-five thousand dollars—per piece, which Leventis wouldn't pay, so when Michel waved three hundred and fifty thousand dollars in Aydin's face for four pieces Aydin accepted the offer. And no, Aydin had never seen the bill of sale as it was finally drawn up; he had signed a bill of sale without the name of the buyer or the price, and written in a language, English, that he could not read.

Savo began to try out more of his own English, like somebody secretly eager to practice it, and soon he was speaking it exclusively. "You must understand that Aydin is one wery good man," he said. "He trust his friends, and Michel play on that trust. They do business for six, seven years and no problems. Michel was often in Munich, he have own apartment near the Englischer Garten, and he buy every good icon that come into the city. Then he send this blank bill of sale to Aydin in Geneva, and get a friend to pretend to be Aydin and shake hands with Peg. A little later, a quarrel start between Aydin and Michel over the blank bill of sale, and Michel say that if Aydin signed it he was stupid, just stupid."

Savo's face lost its lively expression, and a dark thought shadowed his brow. Something like a snort escaped him. "Michel will not live long," he said.

I looked up from my notepad. "Why not?"

"Some people—"

"Yugoslavs?"

"No, not Yugoslavs. Others. They are looking for him."

"What others?"

"Ah, this does not concern you. Michel have many enemies."

Something gilded or golden had been glimmering all the while on a corner of Savo's desk. I leaned forward and looked at it closely. It was

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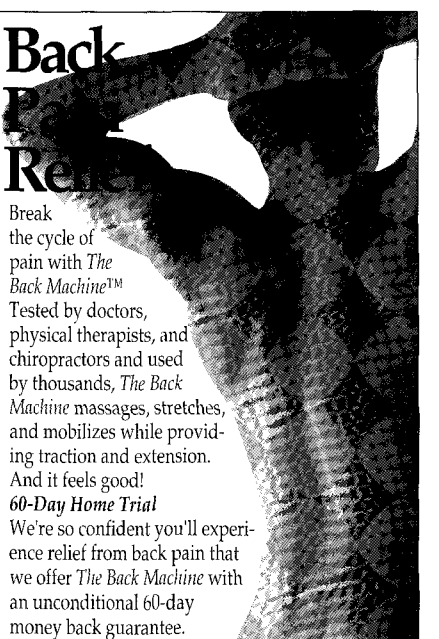

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a picture: an expensive reproduction of an icon of the Blessed Virgin.

"Savo," I said, "are you an Orthodox Christian, a believer?"

"Yes, of course," he replied, without hesitation.

And now I recalled that in his sworn statement, when Joe Emerson, Peg's lawyer, had asked him if he knew where the remaining mosaics were, he had answered that he did. "Savo," I said, "do *you* have the missing mosaics?"

"You may say I have some share in them, yes," he replied.

"Well, if you have some share in them," I went on, "how can you possibly claim to have no financial stake in the outcome of this affair?"

I saw that Maria's eyes held the same question, and I assumed that it would unsettle Savo: his admission of ownership seemed compromising, since the Kanakaria mosaics had been established by an American court to be Cypriot Church property. But his features retained their accustomed geniality. "*Ja.* You might say that I have a stake," he replied. "But that is not the principal thing. The principal thing is my friendship to Aydin."

"Did Aydin sell you your interest?" I asked.

"No, some Turkish Cypriots did. But tell me," he added, with a fleeting frown, "why are the Greeks so concerned about these mosaics? I know where are hundreds of Cypriot treasures. I have offered to tell them, to make a trade, but they never even asked me. They are not interested. I know where is something much more waluable than these mosaics—something wery important to every Cypriot Christian."

"What is that?"

"The Mummy of St. Lazarus," he said.

I was dumbfounded. From my reading, I knew that the Church of St. Lazarus, in Larnaca, had once held the earthly remains of the saint, but his sarcophagus had been empty for over a thousand years. If Savo knew where Lazarus was, he knew something remarkable indeed.

Our meeting seemed to have drawn to a conclusion. We agreed to meet again before long, and Maria escorted me out. In front of the building, I asked her what project the firm was currently working on.

"We are trying to buy something for a Soviet enterprise," she answered. "A system for keeping packaged cement wet."

"I see," I replied, and then, pointing at the embossed logo on the wall, I said, "Tell me, Maria, what does this stand for—this G. & R. Handelsgesellschaft?"

"I really have no idea," she replied.

SAVO had promised to do his best to bundle the Turk over from Munich, and I moved into a cheap hotel, a place to wait in, and called him at regular intervals to ask when Aydin was coming.

He said, "Maybe after two days."

He said, "Over the weekend."

He said, "One day more."

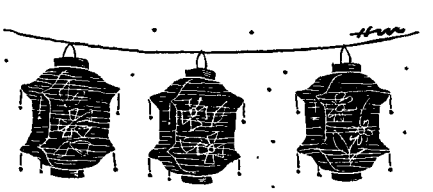
"Why don't I just go to Munich and talk to him there?"

"No, he is Turkish man, many secrets, hides everything. No *Selbstvertrauen.*"

"Self-confidence?"

"*Ja.* Maybe with me, in Wien or Tschechoslowakei, he is more open, more joking, but in München never. In München, he have one boss, and that is his wife, Koca. Koca never let Aydin talk. Wait here in Wien. I bring him, I try."

Out on the streets, the sun beat down, and the rippling Jugendstil palaces rippled with especial vivacity in the broiling air. The Viennese weren't sure how to handle the greenhouse effect; they mopped their brows frantically, and their glasses slipped on their noses. I wandered around, theoretically waiting for Dikmen but with little expectation that he would actually show up. He never did. He seemed to be dodging everyone now, and what assurance did he have, after all, that I was really a writer and not an agent for some political faction or commercial entity? His recalcitrance was understandable: did *I* grasp the real motives of those to whom I talked? Take Savo, for instance: was he keeping Aydin under "house arrest," as Aydin himself had told Peg's interpreter in Amsterdam, or was he "fronting" for him, as Michel had suggested, or, then again, was he something different altogether—



maybe a Russian agent who free-lanced in the antiquities trade—or just what he said he was, an honest émigré engineer? Who in this business was telling the truth, who was lying, who was merely mistaken, and who was retailing—innocently or not so innocently—the lies of others? In my perplexity, I recalled Savo's odd remark that "every bird in Europe" knew more about the Cypriot mosaics affair than the most informed of my compatriots. Yet artistry craves recognition—this holds as true for the hot-air artist as for any other—and it occurred to me that those who had floated so many bubbles of mendacity might now be eager to dispel them, if only for the sheer joy of parading their powers of deceit.

BY this time, Peg had managed to develop a certain rapport with Ahmet Aziz and Mehmet, the Turkish Cypriots whom Savo had mentioned in his sworn statement. These men claimed, among other things, to have proof that Vassos Karageorghis, the former director of the Greek Cypriot Antiquities Department, had long engaged in practices that violated Cypriot law. Indeed, it was rumored that Ahmet, whose family had known Karageorghis for many years before the Turkish invasion, had himself been granted unusual dispensations by the director but had fallen from favor as a result of his own rather too enterprising approach to commerce. Whether or not this was true, Ahmet plainly nursed a certain hostility toward Karageorghis. Peg, for her part, wanted to obtain legally admissible evidence that Karageorghis knew Aydin Dikmen, that Constantine Leventis had paid Dikmen for the two Kanakaria mosaics returned to Cyprus in 1984, and that the Greek Cypriot side had covertly traded in Christian antiquities. In late February of 1991, immediately after the Supreme Court denied her request for an appeal, Peg had placed a transatlantic call to Ahmet, in northern Cyprus. Though she had encountered Mehmet on a visit to Amsterdam, she had never once clapped eyes on Ahmet, but his gravelly voice and beguiling accent—half Turkish, half London—conjured up the image of a tough yet openhearted man in late middle life. She explained to him that she wanted to get an injunction against the removal of the mosaics from the United

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States, and that, according to her understanding of the law, this would require her to produce fresh evidence. Could he help her prove, for example, that Greek Cypriot officials had permitted residents of the island to acquire important Christian antiquities?

He replied that he did in fact possess evidence of such misconduct.

"And you can actually prove it?" she asked.

"Absolutely. I can prove it with names as well."

"And items that they sold?"

"Well"—he sounded put off—"I don't know about Aydin."

"No, no. *Items*," she said, enunciating precisely. "Pieces, that they sold."

But apparently Ahmet was still thinking about Aydin Dikmen. "I arranged a meeting between Aydin and Karageorghis," he said. "Or other officials. Yes, I can prove that as well."

"You can prove that you arranged meetings between Aydin and Karageorghis?" she asked, delighted.

"Of course. There are many things I can prove. Many things. And with names and dates. And these are officials, either with the United Nations—O.K.?—or diplomats, because these were the people who could cross the border during that time. Nobody else could cross the border. That is why, for example, Karageorghis used to send diplomats here—'Go and do this for me'—and he used to pay money. What *happened* to those pieces that they were taking from the churches in the Turkish quarter? He can't *show* them, can he?"

"And you can prove that you were present at meetings when Karageorghis and Dikmen were doing business?"

"Of course. Only there is one problem."

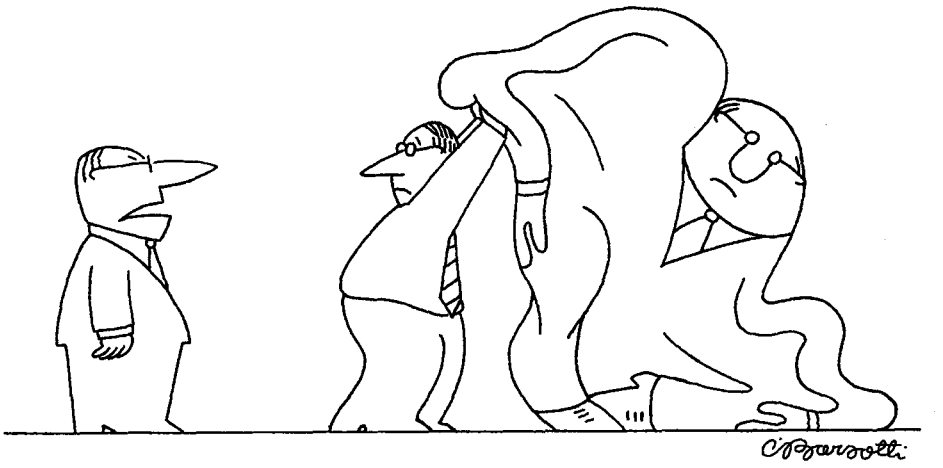
"What?"

"The problem is, I got in touch with Aydin last week. He wants a written statement from you that he never met you in 1988 and he never sold you the mosaics. And this, as far as I know, you promised him in Germany."

"I gave him one copy, and he tore it up," Peg said.

"Now he wants that paper," Ahmet said heatedly. "If you give that paper to him, I promise you we are going to solve this problem."

She said, "I even told Aydin when I went to Germany that in order to help him I would be willing to go to Turkey to testify that he was not the man I met in Switzerland—that van Rijn substituted somebody."



"Yeah? Well, tell him that in this company Gandhi-like resistance wouldn't have worked for Gandhi, either."

• •

This seemed to suit Ahmet. "He is going to help us," he said. "Because, now *I'm* in this business, he hasn't got any other choice. I'll tell you the truth. He knows that what I tell, it will be against him. He offered me some money, and I didn't accept, because I wanted to be on your side."

Later, when I heard this conversation, on tape—Peg was playing it for an audience of curious people in Indianapolis—I could make out her heavy sighs and sense her frustration. But did she understand what sort of statement, what sort of blanket exculpation, Aydin almost certainly wanted from her?

Farther along in the conversation, Peg told Ahmet, "The idiot Cypriots are probably going to put the mosaics on display at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, in order to make me look that much worse in my own home town. So if they do that—if Noland lets them have them next week—and we can file a lawsuit fast enough, then we have a chance to seize them again, so they don't get out of this country." Once again, she emphasized her need for documentary proof of Cypriot perjury. "We have to be able to prove that Leventis and Karageorghis and Dikmen and Petsopoulos were doing face-to-face business all along," she said.

"Yes, we are going to prove that," he said. "No problem for us. Trust me. No problem."

For a few moments, they discussed a future exchange of faxes. Then Ahmet said, "When a new ambassador comes here, from any country, they give him valuable antiquities as a present—which they shouldn't do. They have to keep the pieces in the museums, instead of giving them away."

"So it's only different for me," Peg said, her voice thick with hurt.

"Yes," he said. "We all know their games." And then, sounding rather embarrassed, he began mumbling something about his financial situation. "I don't want to ask money from Aydin, because I don't want to be on his side," he said. "But if I'm going to be on *your* side, you have to look after me. I mean, if I had enough money I wouldn't ask at all." He was beginning to sound pressured and uneasy. Did he think he might have to quit the island, to set up shop elsewhere, out of reach of some enemy or enemies?

"I will do everything possible, everything I can," Peg said, her despair almost palpable now.

"Trust me," he pleaded.

"O.K.," she said.

"In the end, you will see what sort of person I am," he said.

She said, "I sure hope it's a good person."

"Of course."

"I've had enough experience with bad persons," she said.

"EAT slowly," Savo told me. "German food is heavy, make you sick."

A sheepdog flounced by, followed by five giggling children.

"Is funny," Savo said, knitting his brow. "Germans cannot do simple

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things like cook food, but do difficult things wery well. German colonial policy wery effective toward Slav people." He gnawed the meat off a rib as the sheepdog circled back, faster this time, the tots shrieking. Then he palmed another rib. "Slovenia is German plot," he said. "Why do you think there is fighting for customs houses on Austrian border?"

"You tell me," I said.

"German guns," said Savo. "Hey, slowly! This meat have German hormones."

It was six weeks since I'd seen Savo in Vienna. We were now in Munich, where he lived most of the time. We were in a park, at a café with lights strung up overhead in the trees. Peg was with us, and Anna, Savo's wife, and their tiny lapdog, Hercules. Savo had arranged for Ahmet and Mehmet to come to Munich, but so far they hadn't shown up. Ahmet was the key man, and Peg was anxiously waiting for him, waiting for his "proofs." Dikmen himself had vanished; he'd told Savo that he was going to Istanbul for a kidney-stone operation. I was hanging around to see what developed, and running up a bill.

I had arrived a few hours earlier, and had settled into a rather high-class hotel in Schwabing, not far from the center of the city. A heat wave had swept the streets of virtually all pedestrians except the museum- and church-inspecting sort, and it had also given Munich a Mediterranean glitter, a sharpness of definition, that flattered its neoclassical palaces and would have pleased the nineteenth-century sentimental Bavarian taste for the antique. Occasionally, a crowd of young visitors, nearly as naked as Spartan gymnasts, would make a beeline from one scrap of shadow to another. I had tried to keep out of the streets myself, but toward evening, as a tide of cool shadow washed across the city and inched up its spires and domes, I had gone for a stroll on the Leopoldstrasse, and there I spied Peg and Savo and Anna, who had come out looking for me. They were joking and laughing, not at all like strangers whom fate had thrown together but like old friends.

Now it was night, we were eating, and the ribs we had ordered were a foot long and the beer glasses a foot tall—surreal enlargements that seemed scaled to the stature of Peg and Savo. Hundreds of Münchners had sought refuge here from the ferocious heat; they might have been vacationing in Split or Dubrovnik were it not for the fighting in Dalmatia. Savo sat with a foot up on his bench, one knee raised, and on that knee Anna, her fair hair swirled up in a chignon, rested her arm and, sometimes, her cheek. With heavy-lidded hazel eyes, she followed the sheepdog and the children, who were threatening to upset the food trays and beer glasses on the table next to ours. Anna wasn't interested in the mosaics business, which was what Peg and Savo talked about, and she didn't speak any English, but she seemed to understand everything, and if anyone said anything particularly clever her gaze sharpened.

Halfway into supper, I said, "Tell me, Savo, who was Dujan?"

"Dujan? Dujan?" He paused. Then he said, "Ah, Dujo! They killed Dujo a few months ago."

"But who was he?"

"He was one Montenegrin pistolero. They look for him in Amsterdam. I think they call him from street phone and then he come downstairs and—" Savo sighted through an imaginary sharpshooter's rifle.

"Who's they?" I asked.

"Colombian marksmen. The same Colombian drug men who will take care of Michel."

"And how do you know this?"

"Some people in my connection," he said. "Listen, I tell you something. Dujo was put in Michel's old hotel, ParkHotel in The Hague. Michel call down to reception, and as soon as he hear that man with one Yugoslav name has checked into hotel he is terrified, must stay in own room and never go out." Creases of helpless merriment appeared on Savo's face. "Must avoid hotel hallways, avoid windows! Build bunker in room, for two weeks sleeping in bunker!" He said it the German way—*boonker*. With his hands, he showed me how Michel's fortification was positioned relative to the window. "Ha, ha, *boonker!*" he roared. Then his smile sagged, and the mirth drained from his face. He looked at me warily. "You know Michel," he said. "What does he say about me?"

I had been hoping he wouldn't get onto this topic—hoping I wouldn't have to tell him Michel's embarrassing story about the sting operation on the train from Munich to Amsterdam. Actually, I had tried to forget the story altogether, because I thought that it was going to make one of them look like a liar, and I didn't want to get caught in the middle. Now I saw that I would have to say something. "He told a story about a painting—a painting that was lifted from a train," I murmured.

Savo nodded, and swung into his own version of the event. Much to my surprise, he found it hilarious; even more to my surprise, his story tallied with Michel's, except for a few minor details. "I myself wasn't there—it was my friends—but *one hour* after Michel steal this painting I take plane from Munich to Amsterdam, go directly to his hotel in The Hague. I say, 'Give me back painting.' And he give it. Is at home on my wall right now." Then Savo said, "Listen, I'm not angry at Michel now—our fight is over. But you should know that Michel is one man who think only of deception. Every day, must think up some new deception before lunch."

Over the phone the next day, Savo said I should leave Schwabing: he had a good cheap hotel for me on the other side of town. Accordingly, he came around to pick me up in his car, a Volkswagen, and we drove west through the city toward Rothkreuzplatz. Peg sat next to him, and I sat in the back, wondering how a putative gangster could possibly be driving this modest, phoneless, middle-class car. He talked to me over his shoulder about Özgen Acar, a Turkish journalist who had long been studying Aydin's operations. "After Acar wrote articles in *Cumhuriyet* and *Milliyet*, Aydin is put in jail in Konya by Turkish police," he said. "Every police—municipal, military, customs—he is going to Aydin to take money from him. Aydin's brother is driving to help him, driving in Anatolia mountains, when somebody push him off road and kill him. I go to Turkey, deposit documents with Turkish police, and get Aydin out."

"Did you leave money, too?"

"No money. But when Aydin come back to Munich he embrace me. At first, he say, 'Thank you, Savo, thank you.' Then, three days later, he start to change. He say, 'You, Savo, bad man.'" Savo looked unhappy about Aydin's strange, fickle be-

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havior; his cheek quivered with disgust.

We swerved to follow the Nymphenburg Canal, which in the heat gave off a stewed-vegetable odor. Savo squinted into the glare of the road. "I think now Aydin wery greedy man, shit-man." He caught my eye in the rearview mirror. "*Il aime trop l'argent. Il est malade*," he said.

We slowed to pass a row of cyclists slogging along in a strip of shade. "You know, I have some beautiful things, old things," Savo said. "I sell sometimes to Aydin, Aydin pay part, he come back later, try to pay less than he owe me. With some story—I don't know—like rate of exchange: 'Deutsche mark higher, dollar lower.' Over and over, he try to get some nice thing from me. 'Please, please, please, Savo, please,' until finally I must get free from this whining little man. I say, 'Take this and go!' " Savo was practically snorting his words. "You know what I think?" he said. "I think Aydin *must* lie. If he tell me, 'Now I go out and walk on right side of street,' then he must walk on left side. This man does not know how *not* to lie."

Schloss Nymphenburg appeared at the end of the canal, miragelike, trembling in a purplish haze of heat. We pulled up beside a sunbaked inn, which seemed to doze behind lattices closed to keep out the glare. At the reception desk, Savo exchanged a few words with the proprietress, whom he evidently knew, and then we mounted the stairs to a darkened, stale-smelling room in back, a sort of container for last week's weather.

Savo said, "I open the shutter. No, I don't." He scotched the white blaze he had just let in. "Well, anyway, here you have all that you had in Schwabing, but at one-third the price."

Bed, table, armoire, bath, ten-stroke oil of San Giorgio Maggiore—he was right.

"Generic hotel room," Peg said.

I heaved my duffel onto a chair. "Savo," I said, "where are Ahmet and Mehmet?"

"I try to call Ahmet in one hour," Savo said.

I looked at Peg.

"I roared at Ahmet over the phone," she said. "I threatened bodily harm."

"First they were coming in a week," I said. "Then they were coming in a few days. Then they were coming the next day. Now Savo's calling them in an hour. Ahmet and Mehmet, Mehmet and Ahmet."

"They are still in Cyprus," Savo said, shaking his head.

"What is Mehmet's last name, anyway?" I persisted. "Mehmet what?"

Savo gave me a severe look. "Name? Name? Is Turkish *barbar*. Does not need name."

I decided to drop it. "What's his job?" I asked.

"No job," Savo said. "Is wery hot here." He flopped down on the bed, his huge frame sprawled across its rust-colored synthetic coverlet. He hugged his stomach. "I begin to get fat now—over one hundred kilos. Is too hot for one man getting fat."

"Please tell me about Mehmet," I said.

"Mehmet used to work as museum director," Savo said. "Director of military museum—Ottoman uniforms or something."

"Ottoman uniforms?"

"Listen, I myself am wery annoyed at this man," he said. "Want money for everything, for every help—this is fucking Turkish mentality! I have spent thousands and thousands of dollars of my money on mosaics—on proofs so I can sell mosaics. Ahmet have proofs, Mehmet have no proofs. Ahmet want to come to Munich or Istanbul to give the proofs. Mehmet want to go only to Istanbul, to spend money on drink and play with *fatimas*. Ahmet is one wery good man. Mehmet is one wery bad man."

"So forget about Mehmet."

"But Mehmet have some grip over Ahmet."

"Oh."

"I will put check for Ahmet and Mehmet in escrow with Aydin's wife, Koca, some hours before bank close on Friday. This attract Ahmet and Mehmet. Also make Aydin start to think and worry."

Now I was getting confused, but I figured that, just as Mehmet had some grip on Ahmet, Ahmet had some grip on Aydin.

"What's Koca like?" I asked. "Is she a dependable person?"

"Yes, I think so," said Savo. "She is Orthodox, she go to the church. But she is one Gypsy woman, make spells, put curses. Even Aydin is afraid of her. *Elle a beaucoup de phobies*. She is wery afraid of the Devil—maybe because of cutting off that piece."

What piece did he mean, I wondered. Was he imparting a secret again? As so often before, I felt baffled, behindhand, like a man late to the theatre. Savo let his eyelids droop and seemed to slumber in the semidarkness of the shuttered room. Outdoors it was quiet, except for the occasional sound of a child splashing in the courtyard below.

"Savo," I said, "are you telling me that this dependable, churchgoing Orthodox woman cut the Hand of Mary and the Feet of Christ off a rare old icon?"

"She persuade Aydin to do it," Savo said, yawning. His voice seemed to come from far away now, to speak of doings in the distant past, doings that no longer mattered. "He don't want to, but I think she persuade him. She wery sad to sell whole icon, so beautiful, so sacred, and worth big money. So she persuade him to cut off the Feet. He don't want to, but she make him."

Savo rubbed his eyes and sat up. He forced himself off the bed. There was that check to attend to.

ONE evening soon afterward—by now Ahmet and Mehmet seemed unlikely to show up—Savo, Anna, Peg, and I and the lapdog Hercules went into a hotel bar on the Schützenstrasse. It was a postmodern lounge in pinks and creams, with indirect lighting in the moldings and a bar that had a coved illusionistic ceiling—trompe-l'oeil treetops and clouds—and a barman shaking a shaker and a bald lone middle-aged barfly. We sat down in an alcove, and Hercules scampered off under Anna's watchful eye.

Soon, Peg and Savo were deep in a discussion of the purchase in Geneva, the fatal transfer of the mosaics in the summer of 1988. Savo hadn't been there himself, but as he felt his way forward through the story, working out how it must have happened, he began to convey the eerie sensation that he had somehow witnessed the entire transaction. It was as if just by imagining it all keenly enough he could insert himself into the past, take spectral form in the air outside the Hotel Intercontinental, pass through the lobby, with its elegant shops, go up the escalator, float down the long corridors, and noiselessly enter the room, all beige and quilted, where the flesh-and-blood Aydin Dikmen, nervously consulting his watch, was packing his

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bags to check out of the hotel and flee from this wretched deal. Because that, Savo said, was surely how it had been: Aydin had come, waited two days, felt the mounting pressure of his affairs in Turkey, and all that time his money had never arrived. On the last afternoon, he had waited and waited in his bank—it was right across the street from the bank where Peg was waiting—hoping to deposit the proceeds of the sale. And then his bank's closing time came, so he had to stand outside, and Ron Faulk, Michel's lawyer, arrived to reassure him, and Aydin told Faulk that he must have his money by nightfall or the deal was off. And, looking inward, Savo kept on remembering what he had never seen: Faulk imploring Aydin to hold on for just a few more minutes, Faulk running back and forth between the two banks, and then Aydin going back to his hotel, and the money finally coming through from Indianapolis, and the sum being counted out in hundred-dollar bills—a little over a million dollars of it. And Peg and Faulk putting it in two gym bags—how heavy it was!—and Faulk rushing Aydin's share to the lobby of the Intercontinental, where Aydin stood ready with his luggage, and the two of them going back upstairs to count the money again and sign the bill of sale, and Aydin not even keeping a copy for himself as he fled from his room and down the escalator and past the shops in the lobby and out into the thickening dusk.

When Savo had finished the story, Peg said, "I saw the real Aydin back then, you know. I saw him as a blur across the street—I didn't have my contacts on—but I was afraid of going over to him, afraid of spooking him. I saw him standing outside his bank for a while, waiting for the money. The funny thing is that I could swear I saw somebody else standing beside him—an absolutely enormous man."

Savo nodded. "Sunglasses?"

"Yes."

"Wolfgang," Savo said. "Tiny Gianfranco Ferre sunglasses, wery comical on two-hundred-kilo German man."

"I could have walked right over to them," Peg said. "Later, Aydin told me that he would never have sold me the mosaics if he had known who I was." She fetched one of her huge sighs. "I suppose it's because I'm a woman," she said.

"Yes."

"He would have been afraid that I'd dispose of the mosaics too publicly, and at too high a price," she said.

"Yes."

"And if I'd talked to him he would also have discovered the huge difference between what I was paying and what he was getting."

"Yes." Another voice had spoken, too high and hoarse to be Savo's. "At last you have figured it all out. Bravo! Bravissimo!"

We looked up. The voice seemed to have come from nowhere, but there by the bar, looking down at us and holding his beer glass aloft, was the barfly we had passed on entering. He was a pudgy fellow with soft features, like dumplings, and a pair of thick glasses behind which glistened two little eyes full of malice and mock deference. He bowed from the waist toward Peg, like an old-time Prussian officer, and took a foaming sip of his beer. On his chubby, dainty hand flashed a gold ring set with a huge amethyst.

"Who are you?" Savo said, disconcerted—it was the first time I saw him so.

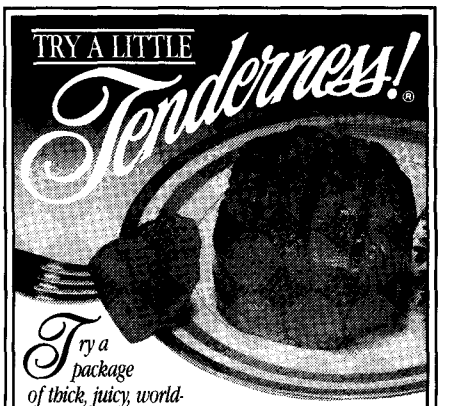
"Just a tourist," said the man, with an insinuating smile. "Just a very special sort of tourist." His English was fluent to the point of slipperiness, and German-accented. Savo turned away from him, like one not caring to acknowledge a phantom, and went on talking to us, in somewhat lower tones. He seemed to be denying the man's presence, and I saw that this denial, in the demimonde of clandestine trading, was tantamount to a kind of virtuosity: Savo felt he could throw away secrets as a pianist tosses off bars of sixteenth notes. He said to Peg, "The only reason that Aydin sell you the mosaics is that he don't know who you are."

"He knew exactly who she was," the man with the amethyst ring broke in; but, like Savo, Peg ignored him.

"When I met Aydin in Munich," she said, "he told me that he had thought the mosaics were going back to Leventis—to Cyprus."

"How convenient," said the amethyst man, but we all snubbed him.

Peg said to Savo, "You know, right before the trial I got hold of the picture



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of Aydin that appeared in the *Independent*, and I said to Joe Emerson, 'Joe, that's not the man I met at the airport in Geneva.' "

"I have seen photo of the man who shook your hand there," Savo said. "Wery good choice, really. He look like Aydin—at least sixty per cent Aydin. Have dark glasses, like Sicilian Mafia—like this American actor on TV, he play role of lawyer—"

"Raymond Burr," said the amethyst man.

Savo glanced up at him. "Yes, like this Raymond," he said grudgingly. "Michel had photo of him. When I was in Amsterdam, Michel take me into his boonker, show me one piece of Samsonite luggage with all documents on mosaics, including one photo of this false Aydin, a friend of Michel's who owns restaurant in Geneva."

"Why would Michel want to show you that?" I asked.

"For a while, when there was peace between us, Michel show me many things," Savo said.

"Aha!" said the amethyst man.

Savo looked up at him and said sternly, "You are not at my table. You are not my guest."

"But I am a guest of the hotel," he replied, with a cheeky smile.

All this time, Anna had been watching her dog as he poked about the bar. But now the amethyst man had engaged her attention with his rudeness, and all at once she stood up and fixed him with her big hazel eyes. "*Sie sind zwar Gast des Hotels, aber Sie sind nicht unser Gast!*" she said fiercely.

Reprimanded by a pretty woman, the man looked crestfallen, discountenanced. He turned away, exchanged a few phrases with the bartender, and then turned back suddenly and stared straight at Savo. "I know you," he said scornfully.

Savo's jaw dropped, and his face took on a worried expression. "You do not know me," he said.

"But I do," said the amethyst man. "And I know your country very well."

"What country?" Savo asked.

"Montenegro," said the man.

"And what is your country?" asked Savo.

"My country? It is not a country. *Ich bin ein Berliner*"—he bowed again, and looked at Peg and me with his insinuating smile—"as your dear departed President once said."

"Do you know my name?" Savo said slowly.

"Your name is not important," said the amethyst man.

Savo looked around at us with evident relief. "He knows nothing," he said. "Ignore him." Then Savo began to draw a diagram of Michel's rooms at the ParkHotel on a paper napkin. He put in a table and chairs and the famous boonker, and then he put in the picture window that looked out over the park behind the Queen's palace.

"Michel told me he moved into that suite so nobody could shoot at him," I said.

"But somebody *could* shoot at him," Savo said coolly. "From here." He drew an arrow just outside the window—out of range, I supposed, of the electronic sensors in the park.

I thought about this for a few moments. Then I said, "Tell me, Savo, how did you know Dujo?"

"Dujo was one Montenegrin bang-bang man everybody know," Savo said. "I know him from child-time. He is criminal, yes, but wery sweet, like baby. He kill only bad men, never for money. And after two weeks Aydin take Dujo away from Michel's hotel. Aydin feel sad for Michel. He know Michel too well, too long. So he take Dujo away."

"Why was Dujo put there in the first place?" I asked.

"Why do you think?" Savo said, and gave me his severe look. "Michel cannot be arrested, has corrupted Dutch

THE FIREMEN

God forgive me—

It's the firemen,
leaning in the firehouse garage
with their sleeves rolled up
on the hottest day of the year.

As usual, the darkest one is handsomest.
The oldest is handsomest.
The one with the thin, wiry arms is handsomest.
The young one already going bald is handsomest.

And so on.
Every day I pass them at their station:
the word sexy wouldn't do them justice.
Such idle men are divine—

especially in summer, when my hair
sticks to the back of my neck,
a dirty wind from the subway grate
blows my skirt up, and I feel vulgar,

lifting my hair, gathering it together,
tying it back while they watch
as a kind of relief.
Once one of them walked beside me

to the corner. Looked into my eyes.
He said, "Will I never see you again?"
Gutsy, I thought.
I'm afraid not, I thought.

What I said was *I'm sorry.*
But how could he look into my eyes
if I didn't look equally into his?
I'm sorry: as though he'd come close, as though

this really was a near miss.

—Deborah Garrison

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police. One day, he ring me up, speak French, then suddenly change to English. Why change to English? So police, who are taping, will understand! His tricks are so obvious. Michel is medium, medium-low in the head. He sell good pieces, but is not intelligent, not cultivated. One thing, though: he have wery good nose for donkeys. Oh, excellent nose for donkeys!"

Peg didn't even smile; she just sat there quietly, toying with her drink.

"Michel has no self-confidence," Savo went on. "Doesn't know where he come from, who he is. Only know how to lie."

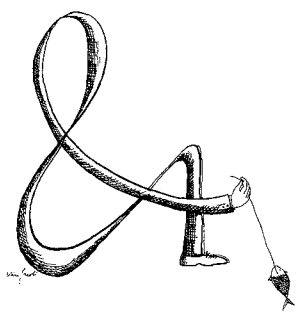
"He thought you were a fool for telling him where and when that painting was coming across the border," I said.

"I told him the *truth!*" Savo said angrily. "Listen to me now. I never lie, because I don't have to. I have self-confidence. I know who I am, who my people are. I am not the son of some *putain!* If things do not go well for me one day, I don't need to lie, because they will go well for me some other day. I tell you, I *never* lie."

Savo was almost bellowing now, and I realized that I had forgotten about the eavesdropper, the amethyst man. I looked up anxiously to see what he made of all this. But there was nobody left at the bar—nobody but the bartender, wiping a glass. The hotel lounge was deserted, except for Anna's little dog pirouetting on the rose-colored carpet.

We left the lounge and got back into Savo's VW. As he drove me out toward Nymphenburg, I pondered two new problems that had begun to loom in my mind. One was the erosion of Savo's presumed faith in Dikmen's word, which, it seemed to me, discredited those of his own revelations which were plainly derived from the Turk. At one time or another, Dikmen had told Peg, Savo, and, apparently, Ahmet that he had never knowingly sold her anything, that he had thought he was returning the pieces to Cyprus, that the sale was a fraud, and that he himself, as seller, had been impersonated by an agent of Michel's. But if Savo no longer gave credence to Dikmen's word—he who had been Dikmen's friend and associate—why should anyone else give it credence? By all accounts, Dikmen was a morbidly evasive man, and surely he had his own motives for claiming that the sale was fraudulent.

The other troubling thing was my fresh understanding of the manner in which the mosaics had been reclaimed from storage at the Geneva airport in order for Peg to inspect them. At the trial, nobody had paid much attention to this, because the notion of a pseudo Dikmen hadn't really come up. Now, however, after Peg's conversation with Savo, something dawned on me: If Dikmen had been paid just before leaving Geneva, then when Peg had been accorded a glimpse of the pieces at the Geneva airport Dikmen still had possession of them. Yet he himself hadn't shown them to her—somebody else had. So he had to have entrusted the claim checks to another person. And that made sense only if this person was as much Dikmen's agent as anyone else's. Dikmen may even have been at the airport all along, to keep an eye on his goods. Peg wouldn't have recognized him; she didn't know him from Adam. He could have been the fellow standing by the wall reading a newspaper, or the fellow standing with his back to her by the baggage-deposit counter.



As Savo pulled up outside my hotel, I put the obvious question to him: "Savo, are you still friends with Aydin?"

"Oh, Aydin!" Savo said. "Before, he call me *Bruder*, kiss hand, kiss foot. Mmm-wah! Mmm-wah! Now Peg come looking for him, and he hide, put head in sand, like this bird—"

"The ostrich. Listen, Savo, your feelings about Aydin seem to have changed a lot. When I first met you, you told me that he was a good man. You stressed his goodness. Now you have contempt for him. He's a liar, a Turkish *barbar*, and so on."

At this, Savo gave me his most reproving look—a look you might give a persistently inattentive child. "I never said he is good," he said. "I said he is good for *Cyprus*. He help Cyprus by saving things—mosaics, frescoes—from fanatics and vandals. And I never call him Turkish *barbar!* I think he is one shit-man, Aydin, but never *barbar*."

I ARRIVED in Cyprus in early September, at the same time the four mosaics did: I saw them sitting in a back room of the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia. I also saw that they had spiritual power: a person of mystical bent might have maintained that they had gone halfway around the world and back as part of some Providential design. I had thought about visiting the church from which they'd been removed, but, not having the heart to contemplate an interior stripped of its splendors, I journeyed instead to several remote Byzantine churches in the south. Tiny basilicas of rustic masonry, often surmounted by a squat cupola scarcely broader than the wingspread of an eagle, they usually stood high in the mountains, on the edges of hollows or ravines, and near villages that the routes of commerce had long ago abandoned to a dignified impoverishment. Monkishly aloof from the melodramatic geological formations about them, they seemed anchored, like outcroppings of bedrock, against the depredations of man and nature.

From my inn in the Troodos Mountains, only a dirt road, rutted and swirling with dust, led to the ancient church of Panagia tou Arakou, near the village of Lagoudera. For an hour, the road galloped and hairpinned through savagely eroded declivities; vistas of ribbed and pockmarked uplands moved brusquely in and out of sight, and amid the sparse pinewoods and dried-out olive orchards an arid white soil showed, like the raw hide of an afflicted beast. Long curving terraces looked all but abandoned to the wind and rain; over them here and there brave attempts at reforestation pushed hard against the sandy wasteland.

It was noontime, and fiercely hot, when I reached the church. Its interior turned out to be entirely covered with frescoes, in a scheme of gold ochre, warm white, dull blue, and rose madder. One's impression was of being completely surrounded by a small pictorial Bible—of actually living inside the Bible—because the paintings gave a fairly complete representation of the story of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin. Down from the dome gazed Christ Pantocrator, the Ruler of All Things, and from between the windows of the drum a choir of twelve dancing proph-

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ets—a wonderful figurative invention—proclaimed the coming of the Son of Man. Farther down, on the vaulted ceiling and walls of the church, the Gospel itself was embodied in a series of paintings representing scenes from the lives of Mary and Jesus; some portraits of saints and early prelates completed the decoration. For anyone familiar with Italian churches, with their great fresco programs, it was the usual assembly, and yet uncommonly poignant; what made it so was the sensation of being tightly wound about—almost swaddled—in joyous color and natural, unforced storytelling energy, the diminutive size of the basilica contributing to the success of the visual narration.

To say that these frescoes were great paintings would be transparently absurd, and yet the painted church was absolutely compelling as a sort of sanctuary, or oasis of divine grace. As its name, *tou arakou*, announces, it was dedicated to the Virgin of the Pea Plant, perhaps because of an apparition in a field planted with peas; if the shrine is difficult of access today, reaching it in the thirteenth century must have required a considerable expenditure of time and energy. Even then the region was probably as parched and deforested as it is now; after hours in the blinding sun, the wayfarer would have thrust his head into this miniature dome, so like a tiny planetarium, and gazed up at a picture of Heaven and its inhabitants; slowly, as his eyes adjusted to the darkness inside, the shapes and colors would have cohered into what he, as a believer, recognized as the very source of his salvation. If the experience had and still has a unique religious force, it is a kinesthetic one, intimately connected to landscape and light, and I wondered if it could ever suffer removal to any other place on earth, be it Munich or Houston, or even Nicosia. Can spirituality be crated and uncrated?

The reappearance of looted Cypriot artifacts in Western hands is peculiarly painful to the Cypriots; one reason is that it reënacts in the cultural sphere some of the humiliation of the colonial condition. Yet confusion and a kind of amateurishness were the hallmarks of the Cypriot efforts to recover stolen treasures. Various Cypriots admitted to me that they had no tradition of international police or customs coöperation. In meetings with four different agencies involved in the recovery effort, I was given four utterly divergent accounts of how matters stood in the attempt to regain the missing Kanakaria mosaics. Cypriot customs intelligence seemed strangely inactive. In Munich, I had discovered that one of Aydin's apartments, on the Goethestrasse, had been raided by Bavarian customs about a year earlier. (A very well informed black marketeer and forger of icons and Fabergé, known as the Old Man, had reportedly tipped off Aydin, and the raid had turned up nothing—an empty apartment.) The Bavarians, who actually had a file on Dikmen, told me that they had never received any help from the Cypriot government.

The person in Cyprus who knew more than anyone else about the ongoing attempts to recover the missing pieces was Michael Kyprianou, a parliamentary deputy and attorney on retainer to the Church of Cyprus; this was the same man whose taped conversation with Michel had so interested Peg after the Indianapolis trial. A chatty man with a foxy expression, Kyprianou told me in his Nicosia office that he had hired a Berlin law firm to look into suing Aydin Dikmen, or, less plausibly, into getting him prosecuted. Michel van Rijn had been cagey, he said, and had offered to make all sorts of swaps and deals, which the Cypriots had rejected out of hand. "We don't go around buying back our own property from thieves," Kyprianou said, his voice dripping with scorn. "Van Rijn knows very well that all his stolen icons are useless. He will have to wait a hundred years to sell them." It was clear, however, that Kyprianou didn't really know who had the missing mosaics.

I discovered that the agreement between the Menil Foundation and the Church of Cyprus governing the eventual return of the Lysi frescoes—an agreement that had been celebrated by the foundation with great blasts of publicity—was generally looked upon with disapproval in Cyprus, where there was tremendous bitterness over the frescoes' sojourn in Houston. A Cypriot civil servant who had negotiated with the Menil told me that "the dynamics of the conversations" had left him with the feeling of "blackmail": if Cyprus didn't cave in to the Menil's self-serving proposal, he felt, the foundation would pull out altogether, leaving the frescoes to their fate. He and his colleagues resented the fact that the paintings had been restored in the strictest secrecy, with no Cypriot participation. After all, weren't Nicosia's own restorers experts at salvaging frescoes? And there was something else that rankled: by now, six years of the Menil's fifteen-year term of custodianship had passed, yet the foundation, which is plagued by financial woes, had failed to put the frescoes on public display, much less build the chapel it had promised. When I asked a senior official if the term might possibly be extended, he answered dryly, "Neither Archbishop Chrysostomos nor any successor will ever agree to such an extension."

While I was in Nicosia, the big independent daily *O Philelefitheros* published a series of articles by Makarios Drousiotis about the huge number of ancient items that had been exported from Cyprus by permission of Vassos Karageorghis, who headed the Department of Antiquities between 1963 and 1989. While Karageorghis was the director, he had ruled with an iron hand. This may have been just what the department needed during the politically chaotic period of his tenure, but he also made many enemies within the Cypriot cultural establishment, and it was obvious that Drousiotis's stories were based on information from angry persons inside the department. The more serious of the allegations were that Karageorghis had granted twelve hundred export licenses to various individuals for a vastly higher number of objects (for example, sixteen hundred items were exported to Switzerland under a single license), that he had not kept pictorial records of what left the island, that he had failed to protect ancient tombs at Amathounta from being bulldozed for hotel sites, that he had bought antiquities on behalf of the Cypriot state from illicit Turkish Cypriot operators during the enclaves period, that he had failed to adequately publicize and try to retrieve stolen pieces, and—this was perhaps the gravest charge—that he had allowed foreign diplomats to re-

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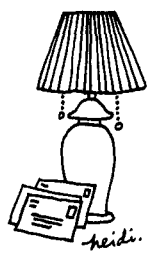
move extensive collections from the island.

The Director of Antiquities does indeed have the sole right to issue export licenses; the office itself is a holdover from British colonial days, and is unregulated by any modern democratic legislation. Thus, except for some petty infractions, Karageorghis does not seem to have broken the law. But many Cypriots were affronted by what they regarded as his unseemly conduct and abuse of his discretionary powers. Karageorghis and his defenders responded that he had released only items of low value—broken things, multiples, and such; some of the pieces in question, however, had gone on display in foreign museums. His no-show in Indianapolis has never been convincingly explained, and, while not illegal, it did obstruct the attempts of lawyers on both sides to gather evidence; now I heard from a well-placed source in Cyprus that Karageorghis had flatly refused to be deposed. According to the Greek Cypriot press, it seemed likely that his purchases from illicit Turkish dealers between 1963 and 1974 had in fact been quite extensive. It might be added that the Turkish Cypriot authorities had long claimed that Karageorghis had commissioned Turkish Cypriots to illegally obtain artifacts inside their enclaves; they also noted that in the period following the invasion the Turkish Army had confiscated numerous unregistered Greek collections, suggesting—to them, at least—some sort of dubious arrangement.



I visited Dr. Karageorghis in his downtown office in Nicosia. He is a small, courtly white-haired man, with a high voice and a somewhat buttoned-down manner; he had the aura of one who after many decades of public service is at last free to devote himself almost exclusively to his scholarly labors, from which I had no doubt I was distracting him. I asked him if it was true that he had refused to testify in Indianapolis, and he replied, quite amiably, that it was an absolute falsehood. He told me that he had informed his government that he was ready to testify on twenty-four hours' notice but that no official had requested him to do so. And what about Ahmet Aziz? His allegations against Karageorghis—for example, that Karageorghis had dealt directly with Aydin Dikmen—had once seemed rather fanciful; now they seemed vaguely plausible. Yet when I asked Karageorghis if he had ever met someone named Ahmet Aziz his expression relaxed, and he smiled at his recollection of the man.

"Ahmet Aziz was an old crook," he said. "He had an antiquities shop in Konak Square—what the Turks call Atatürk Square—and he had connections all over the island. During the period of the enclaves, I had the right to inspect, for our government, the Cathedral of St. Sophia, and nobody followed my movements. Technically, I wasn't supposed to visit people like Aziz, but I was desperately concerned to prevent valuable parts of our heritage from leaving the island, and I bought a lot of things from him for our collections. You must understand that we had no other access to sites within the enclaves—not even our police did. We bought mainly ceramics from him, and also, I recall, an early Bronze Age model of a sanctuary. It seems to me that he had somebody working with him—a young man who made very clever forgeries and 'married' pieces. But I don't think Aziz and his people were of a calibre to have relations with the antiquities mafia—they were just petty swindlers."

"How old was Aziz then?" I asked.

"He must have been well over sixty. A short, chubby man—not in good health."

"Have you heard anything more about him?"

"No, I haven't—only a bird, you know, can cross the Green Line—but his health was very bad at the time."

Silently, I totted up the years: Aziz would be over eighty by now, whereas his voice in Peg's taped phone conversation had suggested a man no older than sixty.

"Are you sure he's really that old?" I asked.

"You know, Aziz must be dead," said Karageorghis. "He'd have died by now, I am sure."

SURVEYING Nicosia from the high terrace of the Saray Hotel, in Lefkoşa—as the Turks style their side of the capital—you look across a plain of tiled rooftops, here and there etched by a winding street or grooved by a broad avenue. This tableland is also studded, savannalike, with clusters of minarets,

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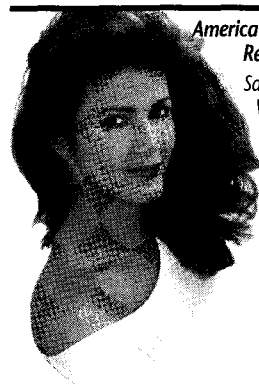

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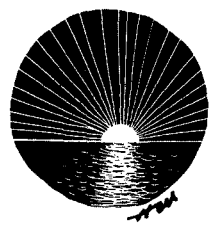
such as the pair that rise over the Selimiye Mosque, originally the Cathedral of St. Sophia, built in the Gothic style by the Crusader dynasty of the Lusignans. At once, you see that the architecture of Cyprus is always staking some national claim, even when it reminds you only of conquerors long departed—Franks or Ottomans or British. At no time, however, can the abrasion of tribe against tribe or temper against temper have been more architecturally evident than it is today, with the low houses of the Turkish quarter abutting the white cliff of Greek Nicosia's modern tower blocks. This is the Green Line, which from the air is clearly legible: a matter not only of politics and geography but also of the very tempo of life—the daily music of risings and meals and labors and siestas. Compared with the south, the north feels becalmed and almost indolent, adrift on a warm tide of custom and convention. The south is hectic, plugged in, internationalized, even somewhat de-Hellenized, whereas the north is relaxed, amiably befuddled, and profoundly traditional, with all the charming amenities of Turkish life.



Foreign observers, though confirming the disastrous looting of Greek Church property in the north since the invasion, have tended to see it as a fault of omission rather than one of commission, noting that the Turks know nothing of Christian art, cannot afford the regiment of wardens necessary to guard Byzantine sites, and are plagued by a mafia of art thieves largely directed from abroad; such observers also point out that the Greek side has effectively blocked foreign aid for archeology and historic preservation in northern Cyprus. I spoke with about fifteen Turkish Cypriots—government officials, civil servants in the Turkish Cypriot Antiquities Department, opposition spokesmen, and interested private persons—and failed to detect in their discourse any disrespect for Byzantine art or Greek culture generally: they appeared to realize that it was their pressing duty to salvage what remained of the north's Byzantine heritage, and they condoned nothing that had happened in previous years. There was no doubt that thievery had been abetted by a certain element of philistine chauvinism, but nobody—including the new director of the Turkish Cypriot Antiquities Department, the liberal-minded Ali Kanli—felt that the ideological factor was of primary importance. The main factor was greed.

After making contact with a number of unofficial sources in Lefkoşa, I realized that I had arrived during a lull in an ongoing conflict between, on the one hand, the smugglers and their allies (some of whom were rather well connected socially) and, on the other, certain state archeologists and the opposition newspaper *Ortam*. *Ortam* traded information with Özgen Acar, at *Cumhuriyet;* late in 1989 it had published some thirty unsigned articles about antiquities thievery. (The articles were contributed by a concerned civil servant, whose car was torched for his pains.) With the help of interpreters, I began studying these pieces, which gave a detailed and lurid picture of criminal operations on the island; Aydin Dikmen's name was all over the place. The *Ortam* issues of October 2nd and 3rd disclosed that the Turkish Cypriot police had begun an investigation of the Lysi frescoes case six years earlier, and that Dikmen had been implicated in the theft. Because he lived abroad, however, they had been unable to detain him.

After I had been in northern Cyprus a few days, I started looking for Ahmet Aziz. I poked my head into some haunts on Arasta Street, and I pestered the café smokers near the former caravansery, and the crowd of taxi-drivers who stood about waiting for fares by the Kyrenia Gate, in the shadow of the Venetian city wall. The café habitués and the cabmen twiddled their key chains and gazed into space, searching their memories; the shopboys turned to call over their shoulders, relaying my query past rows of magazines or batteries or nutcakes to elderly answerers in dim recesses. The old Turkish quarter was a dawdly place, a place of long conversations and slowly sipped coffees, sugar syrup, honey, buzzing flies, obliging smiles, and gestures of accommodation; but no, nobody had heard of an antiquities dealer with the surname of Aziz—unless it was someone who died a long time ago. All the same, I continued my circuit, and just as my patience was beginning to give out, the name Aziz began to elicit a certain hesitant recognition in the halls of notability and officialdom. In high-ceilinged anterooms and shabby-genteel offices, under the omnipresent brooding stare of Kemal Atatürk, guesses were hazarded and conjectures floated.

"Ahmet Aziz, Ahmet Aziz . . . I think you must mean Ahmet Bulliçi," said one man, a barrister. "*Bulliçi* means something like 'poulterer' in our language—I suppose he must have sold chickens at one time. He's been dead a long while, but I knew him. It is true that he obtained many curious items from the free-lance excavators for his shop, off Atatürk Meydani. If I recall correctly, Ahmet had a son-in-law, tall, thin, with a beard, who worked with him and helped him out. The shop is still there, across from the Venetian Column, but it has changed hands. I think it's a cambio now."

At a government ministry, another man said, "This Ahmet chap cuts a figure here. You know him as Ahmet Aziz, but that is not his real name. It is his stepfather's name, which he took when he took over his stepfather's shop, many years ago. Here he is known as Sakalli Ahmet, which means Bearded Ahmet. He was in prison in England in the late eighties for smuggling, and it wasn't for smuggling antiquities, either. I don't know where he spends his days now, but ask around—you will find him. He is charming and very popular."

Then I ran into a man so knowledgeable that he just took out a pen and paper and began to sketch the way to Ahmet's shop—a new shop, it turned out, for Ahmet had just changed addresses. "Ahmet is actually the biggest smuggler on our side of the island," the man said, in Turkish—another man interpreted for us. "He once pulled a knife on two inspectors from our Antiquities Department. Now he's asking for a license to deal in antiquities again, even though no such licenses have been issued for over fifteen years." As the man spoke, he completed his map. He had put in the Green Line, the Ledra Palace Hotel barricade, and the stoplights at the crossing of Memduh Asaf Street and Ikinçi Selim II Avenue, and on the avenue itself he had put in a souvenir shop, a nut shop, and then another shop, which he neatly labelled "Ahmet Kadir Dinç."

So Peg's Ahmet was *that* Ahmet! I

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stared in amazement. I'd known for months who Ahmet Kadir Dinç was—everybody knew—but I'd unquestioningly assumed that Peg's Ahmet was somebody else. (Ahmet is a very common name.) The trader who styled himself Ahmet Kadir Dinç—*dinç* means "vigorous" in Turkish—had figured prominently in Turkish Cypriot government and press reports about smuggling. I'd seen an old newspaper clipping in which a smirking Ahmet advised tourists on how to spirit their illegally acquired amphorae and fibulae out of northern Cyprus. He was described as having an excellent grasp of the history and value of Cypriot antiquities, and as being clever at forming alliances with traders and politicians. Ahmet, too, had been accused of involvement in the stealing of the Lysi frescoes: a fellow widely regarded as one of Aydin Dikmen's accomplices had told the police that he had seen Dikmen in Ahmet's shop at the time of the burglary, and that some fresco fragments had been hidden there for about a week. But the police could not prove much of anything against Ahmet, and he had vehemently denied all the charges made against him by *Cumhuriyet* and *Ortam*. He was shrewd, elusive, amusing. When I asked my informant when I could find him in his shop, I was told "Always."

Ahmet's place was no more than a few hundred yards from the Green Line—well situated for anyone hoping to do business one day with the Greek side. When I arrived there, I saw a bearded man—tall, lean, strong, loose-jointed, standing in front of a shop with his hands on his hips. He surveyed the street in classic *bazaari* fashion—ten seconds up one way, ten seconds down the other, then back up again, back down, and so on. There was nobody on the street but me. I went up to him. "Ahmet," I said.

Strangely, he seemed to be expecting me. "Oh, it's you," he said. I recognized the faintly London speech, those glottal stops, but he was not at all as I had pictured him; the face didn't match the voice. That voice was so ragged from smoking that I had imagined him an older man—gray-haired, timeworn, chastened—whereas he couldn't have been much over forty. His hair and beard were piano black, his frame erect, elastic.

"Got a few minutes?" I asked.

"No problem," he said, and he motioned me inside.

Ahmet's shop was long and narrow, and crowded with antique copper cauldrons and hand-painted narghiles. He showed me to an office in the back, with a few chairs and a cluttered desk, then vanished into a narrow galley behind it and returned in a moment with a cup of Turkish coffee and a glass of water, which he set down before me.

"You are welcome," he said. "I am always here, come by whenever you like." His smile was very pleasant.

I said, "So, Ahmet, I understand you aim to get your license back."

"Yes, and my solicitor has told me I shall get it," he replied.

"What does the Turkish Cypriot Antiquities Department have to say to that?"

His lips curved into a smile of derision. "You have met the department's new director?" he asked.

I said that I had.

"And what is your opinion of him?"

"What's yours?"

He lit a cigarette and dragged on it. Veils of smoke floated out of his mouth. "Look," he said, his voice growing even more gravelly. "Think of a baby. How does this baby first move? He crawls, yes? What does this baby do next? He walks, but in a very shaky way—one foot forward, then the next, side to side. Well, Ali Kanli is like this baby. He has learned to crawl, but he cannot walk properly. Believe me, he knows nothing. He is so scared of the Greeks and their propaganda that he doesn't dare move. To attack Karageorghis, he would need to know what I know. But he knows nothing, whereas I know everything, and, believe me, that is a problem for him, because I also know everything about his department."

No one could have denied that Ahmet was handsome, of a handsomeness somehow Oriental, or Middle Eastern, rather than simply Mediterranean. That swarthy tint, that curving scimitar nose, those dark pupils lolling under the long calligraphic flourishes of the eyebrows—perhaps Ahmet's ancestors had been Phoenician traders or adventurers hereabouts. He had a way of tilting his head back as he spoke, so that his eyes, foreshortened, became almonds, and his mustache turned into a perfect arch, and his beard expanded and grew blacker, more velvety. As he shifted his head this way and that, it seemed to change shape and size against the wall behind him, and it occurred to me that his sort of face shown against a light background formed the principal problem of the old icon painters, which was to give the model-

"I can't give you anything but love."

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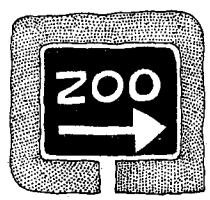
ling of a very dark head against a nimbus of gold. Comb his hair with an eggbeater, throw a camel skin over his shoulder, and Bearded Ahmet would have made a perfect John the Baptist.

"Ahmet," I said, "is it true that you were in a British jail for a while?"

He smiled with half his face—it was a cute, stagy smile that would have carried a message of "loucheness" up to the third loges. Maybe he relished the question, for it was clearly a part of his seductiveness to emerge from a past of which there were many contradictory accounts—collectors' reminiscences, police reports, foreign-intelligence memoranda, brittle yellowed press clippings—so that his life in the end grew protean, multidimensional.



"I was six years in jail," he began, rhetorically poking the air with a Bic lighter. "I was arrested with a family who were smuggling something into England—not antiquities, something else. I was innocent, but I was the one they decided to charge, just because I happened to speak English. Oh, if you think there is such a thing as justice in the courts of Great Britain, believe me, you are sadly mistaken! There was no evidence against me. All day long, the jury failed to reach a verdict, and then the judge called them back in and scolded them and forced them to make a decision, and they deliberated for only an hour more and then decided, ten to two, that I was guilty. From six against six to ten to two, in one hour! That is the British sense of fair play!"

"Did your jail term have anything to do with your earlier activities here?" I asked him.

His eyes flashed, and his lips parted, then closed again. He thought for a moment, and said, very cautiously, "I have always suspected that the Greeks leaned on the British prison authorities while I was doing time. But don't get me wrong—how would I know? I was in prison, not at embassy receptions. But I have said certain things, true things, about diplomats and U.N. people—things that I know outraged them."

Up to then, no one had come into the shop, but now a man entered and saluted Ahmet. He was strongly built, though somewhat overweight, with floppy bangs of fairish hair—a sort of middle-aged Turkish Cypriot preppy. He wore buff-colored trousers and a cotton shirt striped in black and purple.

"This is my friend Mehmet," said Ahmet.

Mehmet pulled up a chair and held out his hand. "Mehmet Rasih Savarona," he said. By now, I was beyond being amazed at Peg's failure to get someone's identity straight. In the antiquities milieu, people learned what they wished to learn. Why should Peg have known that Mehmet was a former antiquities director for the Kyrenia District, or that he was said to have been embarrassed into early retirement after court testimony in Kyrenia that he had been involved in a burglary of the icon depot in the city's medieval castle in 1981? The Kyrenia prosecutor had accused Mehmet of altering the museum's inventory and substituting worthless icons for valuable pieces. Hundreds of paintings had disappeared, but the testimony against him—that of two museum guards and a police-department handwriting expert—had been inconclusive, and Mehmet had not been convicted.

I introduced myself as a reporter and asked Mehmet what he was doing now. He told me that he was pleasantly pensioned off. This was an option in Turkish Cyprus, he said, to take an early pension, and he had taken it of his own free will—nobody had hounded him into it. Mehmet said that he was frankly suspicious of journalists: they were ill informed and hungry for sensation, and they had quite misunderstood the antiquities question. Remembering pressing business elsewhere, he got up and left.

When he had gone, I said, "Ahmet, have you spoken to Peg recently?"

"Poor Mrs. Goldberg," he said—this was obviously the name by which he knew Peg—"I feel sorry for her, and, believe me, I want to help her. But to establish trust in this business you must act honestly, and I do not feel she has acted quite honestly in this affair." He gave me a pained smile and fixed me with his eyes as if I were the miscreant in question.

"How is she dishonest?" I asked.

He mused for a few moments. "Perhaps, after all, she *is* honest," he replied, "but somehow they managed to brainwash her. You see, Mrs. Goldberg has never really understood anything. She went wrong at the beginning. This Michel van Rijn, for instance. Believe me, until all this business started I had never once heard his name. But then, when I was watching a BBC program on the trial taking place in your country and saw him being interviewed by a British journalist, I recognized his face, because he was here, in Cyprus, maybe ten years ago. He was in my old shop more than once. Never as Michel van Rijn, mind you—always as, you know, 'Bill from Denmark,' or something. There was a paper that Mrs. Goldberg produced at the trial—a false export license used by Aydin Dikmen to get the mosaics out of Turkish Cyprus. Well, Aydin never possessed or gave her such a document. I believe van Rijn said he got it from Aydin before giving it to her, but this is untrue. Who knows who forged that paper? Well, after van Rijn she found Benjamin, and she listens to this Benjamin, who knows nobody, who knows nothing, who has begun to threaten Aydin. But, believe me, this threatening can cut two ways. I do not know who Benjamin's people are, but do you think Aydin is alone? He is not alone. He is very clever, Aydin."

"It's odd that you talk that way about Savo—I mean, Benjamin," I said, probing, "because he seems to like you. He brought a favorable opinion of you to Indianapolis after his trip to Cyprus."

Ahmet made his eyes big and spooky and flashed me a sarcastic smile. I was of no use to him except as a sort of gossip conduit or telegraph service—this was something that we both understood—and I sensed now that he was about to transmit a message of particular urgency. He leaned forward on his desk, over his pocket calculator and little pads and flip calendar and the cup of Turkish coffee and the glass of water.

"Benjamin has never been in Cyprus," he said quietly. "He never went any farther than Istanbul. A year and a half ago, he told us to meet him there, at the Pera Palas, and he told Mrs. Goldberg that he paid Mehmet's and my expenses, but, believe me, he did not. I did. If he took any money from Mrs. Goldberg to visit Cyprus, then he kept it for himself. And, of course, he *had* to speak well of me, and to say that he knows me and he

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knows Mehmet and Aydin, because in this way he becomes the broker, he makes himself important to her. You see his psychology. But he is not important."

"Maybe he came here afterward, without your being aware of it."

Ahmet looked at me as if I were crazy. All the while he was talking, he toyed and gestured with things on his desk: pens, pencils, cigarettes, his lighter. The things migrated through his fingers, wiggling around, until it seemed that maybe they were alive and his hands inanimate. Now he'd got hold of a tiny screwdriver, of the sort used to replace the batteries in a pocket calculator, and he said, waving it, "How much money has Benjamin taken off Mrs. Goldberg so far—do you know?"

"I know nothing about it," I said.

"No, I think she would not tell anyone," he said. "But, believe me, all the things Benjamin has said to the court in your country—all this about how he has known Aydin for so-and-so many years, and how he has met Leventis with Aydin in London, and so on and so on—all this is only his word. He has no proofs. He doesn't really know Aydin, he has never been a friend of Aydin."

"Not before? Before the trial?"

"No, never! Benjamin works Mrs. Goldberg against Aydin, just as he works Aydin against Mrs. Goldberg. Don't you see—he's a double agent! I told her so. I told her, 'Mrs. Goldberg, you are making a terrible mistake!' "

I said, "Benjamin says he has an interest or share in the missing Kanakaria mosaics. He says that he bought them jointly with some Turkish Cypriots. Is this true?"

Ahmet smiled with half his face again. "I don't know about that," he said. "I cannot talk about who owns the missing pieces. One day in future, the mosaics will probably go back to the Church—don't get me wrong. But it will take a long time. A very long time."

A pair of young Turkish girls entered the shop, and he briefly attended to them. Then he returned to his desk. "Mrs. Goldberg cannot get the mosaics back now—only money," he said. "She can file a lawsuit, if she can prove that she was slandered by somebody, or that there was some fraud on the Greek side. But for this she needs me and two others."

He found a pad and drew three dots on it. "You must think of three points to be connected by a triangle," he said. "Alone, none of us has the necessary evidence. Together, we do. But to make this connection"—he arched his eyebrows—"she needs me."

"And what do you expect in return?"

"Well, you see how things are." He waved around at the shop, once again empty of customers. "The Gulf War has not done us any good here. And my proposal is perfectly fair. She would help me, I would help her. I and Mehmet and Aydin."

"She has no money," I said.

"Tsss! If she paid two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to van Rijn for some paper during the trial—"

"Really? What paper?"

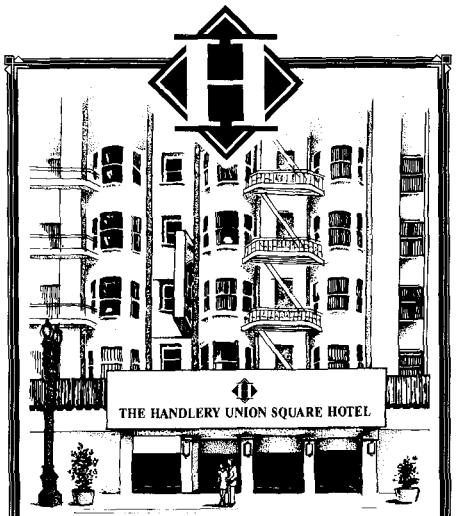
"These are things that we know," he said. He waggled his screwdriver in the air. "Oh, don't get me wrong, I am very sympathetic to her. But I have told her frankly, 'Mrs. Goldberg, this is business. You've got to be reasonable.' "

He put the screwdriver down and reached for a fluted plastic bottle. Jiggled, it gave off a sweet lemon smell.

"I believe we are all in business," he said, flourishing the scent bottle. "So what do we all want? We want this!" He plunked the bottle down on the table. "Money! She needs some." He moved the bottle one way. "And I need some." He moved it back. "It is no good any of us pretending."

"But what sort of proofs could you offer her? Proofs of what?"

"This I cannot reveal," he said, smiling mischievously and shaking the scent bottle in a warning gesture. "But, remember, in the period between 1963 and 1974, the time when we Turkish people lived in enclaves, surrounded by our enemies, my stepfather was already too old to run his shop. I ran it. There was terrible poverty and unemployment then, and some of our villagers had raised illicit excavation into an art. A lot of them really knew the pieces. And, believe me, *I* knew the pieces. One day, they called me secretly to a tomb. They were digging things up, and a little after I arrived they dug up this really beautiful big pot. And I said to them, 'Am I a baby? You put that



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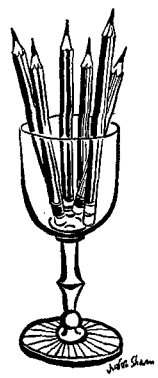
fake there last night.' 'Shhh-shhh,' they said. 'Shhh-shhh.' Well! At that time, I personally sold many things to Karageorghis—he bought many things from people in the Turkish quarter. But where are these things now? You will not find them in the Cyprus Museum."

"O.K., where are they, then?"

The cute smile flickered at the corner of Ahmet's mouth. "Go ask Vassos," he said. He lit a cigarette.

"O.K., Ahmet, but how can you prove all this? Do you have documents?"



He screwed up his face. "Ah, now, this is something I tried to explain to Mrs. Goldberg. I said to her, 'Mrs. Goldberg, we are in the smuggling business. Do you think we do bookkeeping, ledgers? Do you think Aydin has invoices and bills of sale?' No invoices! Aydin never puts anything, anything, anything on paper."

"Well, where does that leave Peg?" I asked. "She might just as well go after Aydin, then."

"Impossible," Ahmet said, grinning. "Nobody can go after Aydin. Nobody can find him. He is constantly moving—Istanbul, Ankara, Konya. Who knows where this man is? He is running from the police, running from this reporter Özgen Acar—from Acar, who says he knows all about him but has never met him, or maybe once, very briefly. Acar chases Aydin all over. Aydin is made very anxious by this chasing by Acar."

"It's fame," I said. "He's a famous man now."

"Yes, but before all this practically nobody knew anything about Aydin. For many, many years. And now everyone has heard of him. In London, New York—everywhere. And who has done this to him, do you know?" Ahmet curled his lips inward and wafted out a veil of blue smoke. "It's Mrs. Goldberg. Mrs. Goldberg has made Aydin Dikmen a famous man!"

Now from a minaret the muezzin called out, and the chanting voice, running up and down scales, was like a courier dashing all over the quarter with his news. He was telling us that God is great and Muhammad is His Prophet and we should drop our petty business and get down on our knees and pray.

I said, "The Lysi investigation is still open. There could be some interesting testimony against Aydin. There were those two shepherds who saw men with ladders and cloths and buckets of glue—the same glue that was used to pull the mosaics off the walls of the Church of Panagia Kanakaria."

Ahmet blew smoke and shook his head disdainfully. "Let us say that Aydin did steal the Lysi frescoes," he said. "Let's just say he did do it, to make an argument. O.K., I ask you: where is the evidence? To make a case you have to have evidence. Shepherd boys, ladders! There is no *evidence* against Aydin Dikmen!"

Suddenly I remembered the sound of Ahmet's voice on the telephone to Peg, saying, "He knows that what I tell, it will be against him." I looked up at Ahmet expectantly, but he rummaged about on his desk top with an air of finality. He pushed the pack of cigarettes and the lighter and the scent bottle out of the way. He found a clean white pad and drew a big dot on it. Then, still holding his cigarette, he drew a line out from the dot in a shallow curve that began looping back toward the dot.

He said, "This dot is Cyprus. This is where everything started. Well, then: where is everything going to finish?"

"Cyprus?"

"Believe me, yes. For Mrs. Goldberg also." He blew smoke. "She should have come to me a long time ago."

SOON after I returned home from Cyprus, in October, I called Savo to see how he was getting on with Aydin.

"Aydin is here in Munich, but don't will help," Savo said. "He prove that he is one wery bad little man. He call me from public telephone about lady, what lady want. He say he is in Turkey. I say, 'I know you call from here, not Turkey.' And he answer, '*Nein!* My coins for telephone is out. Bye-bye.'"

Unlike so many other people, Savo had never seemed obsessed with the mosaics; he had never been a Kanakaria junkie. Now, on the phone, he abruptly changed the subject. He wanted to talk about the correct diet for children—no German hormones!—and the fighting in Croatia. Clearly, his friendship with Aydin was over.

From Savo I gathered that Aydin still claimed that he had never sold the mosaics to Peg. This sounded silly, but it occurred to me that Aydin, in Geneva, may have already been compensated for the mosaics—in money or goods or collateral; it was possible that Michel had bought the pieces, and was reselling them to Peg, and that Aydin was actually selling something else, and had not understood the English-language contract he was asked to sign. There was some evidence for this theory: lists of unrelated pieces possibly traded on the same occasion had surfaced among Ron Faulk's papers during the Indianapolis lawsuit. The theory would also explain why Aydin, on his arrival in Geneva, might have been willing to yield his claim checks to somebody else. Probably the only person who could willingly solve this riddle was Aydin's companion Wolfgang—he of the enormous bulk and tiny Gianfranco Ferre sunglasses. The question of Wolfgang's surname had come up in Faulk's testimony. It was something like Krauzer—Faulk hadn't been quite sure; by several accounts, he was an antiquities trader and a familiar of Aydin's. After making some inquiries, I tracked him down and passed him a note through an acquaintance. But I received no answer.

And where were those missing mosaics? At times, I thought I knew. Aydin had this, Marko and Draža and Hans had that, Savo and Aydin and Mehmet had an arrangement worked out, maybe Peg had bought into an Apostle or two. At various times, pieces were sighted in Amsterdam, in Vienna, in a boonker in northern Cyprus. The last I heard, they had been gathered together by Savo and were "safely vaulted" in Switzerland; and then one day I realized that I would never find out who had them. How could I? What sort of document would prove it? What photograph? And even if someone were to take me to a bank vault, and let us in with a key, and stand there with his arms around those priceless treasures, how would I know they were actually his? How could I be sure that they didn't in reality belong to the man outside, the man leaning on the wall of the bank reading *Die Zeit*?

In London that November, I met with Constantine Leventis. He was not well cast for the part scripted for

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him in the rumor mill of the undercover traders. Where a superbly self-confident secret-agent type would have been required, here was a short, slightly rounded man in spectacles, sensitive-looking, modestly dressed, and quite devoid of the imperiousness of the very rich. After some conversation, I asked him if he had read Savo Kujundzic's sworn statement, and he told me that he had. "He said that I was thin and—what was it?—arrogant," Leventis said, and gave me a wry look, as if to suggest that he couldn't pull off arrogance if he wanted to.

I said, "Kujundzic stated that you met Aydin Dikmen about nine years ago, at Sotheby's."

"I've never met Mr. Dikmen in my life," Leventis replied. "The first time I heard Mr. Dikmen's name was a couple of months before the Indianapolis trial. Many years earlier, at the time of the salvaging of the Lysi frescoes, I had asked Yanni Petsopoulos for the name of the man who possessed the frescoes, but I saw that he wasn't going to give it to me. Mr. Petsopoulos is a dealer, and I suppose dealers have some sort of etiquette about sources. He told me the source's story about the frescoes' Anatolian provenance—how at first he'd believed it and then changed his mind. But that's only what he told *me*."

"In your deposition," I said, "you stated that you had no art collection. Many people say that you do."

"Oh, yes, I do have one," he said. "I must have misunderstood the question. But it is true that I have no Cypriot pieces. Other antiquities, yes. Nothing very valuable."

I asked him, "Do you know where the rest of the Kanakaria mosaics are?"

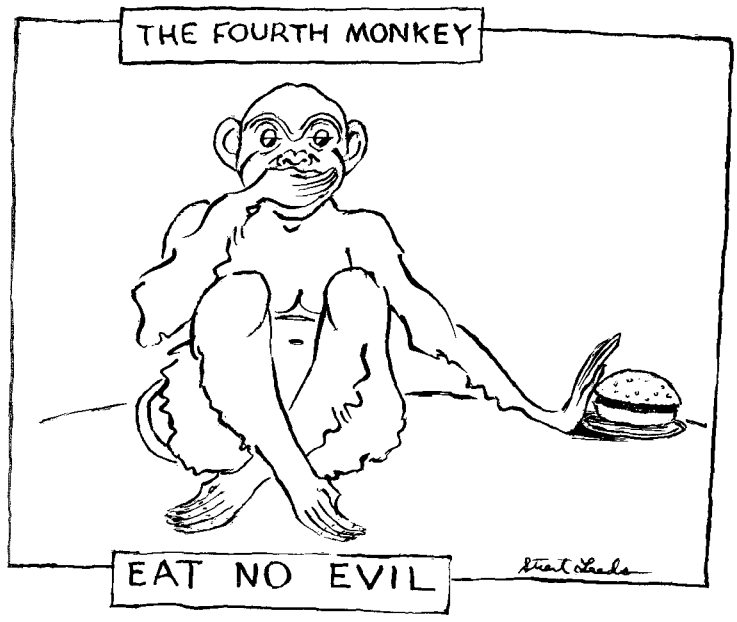
"Not really," he said. "No more than what the Cypriot government tells me."

The sad truth is that most of what has been stolen from northern Cyprus will never be recovered. In the late seventies and early eighties, many churches and monasteries were stripped of their panels and frescoes. Consulting with certain restorers and archeologists in Nicosia and London, you might easily reconstruct the robberies. I noticed, for example, that in most cases the same sort of quick-drying cobbler's glue and cloth facings were used to pull the frescoes and mosaics from the walls; one person or team or operation seemed to have gutted all these churches. The interest in certain motifs, the telltale traces of circular saws, the leisurely concentration or fear-betokening haste—all these could tell you something about the principal thief. Was he the same Turkish gentleman who had sold Peg the mosaics? Aydin, I'd heard, had started out as a technical draftsman and part-time musician in Konya, where he had bought antiquities from workers at archeological digs. He had extended his operations to Cyprus after the invasion of the island, and, according to some stories, had put his accomplices through academic art-restoration courses, in which one of them had learned enough to strip the fragile mosaics from Kanakaria. Aydin was reported to have been arrested, but to have evaded indictment. According to some accounts, he tried to restore things, studied art history, wrote delicately with a calligraphic pen, made drawings in an art-school manner. Though he may have destroyed many of the world's surviving Byzantine church interiors, he apparently continued to see himself as a savior of Cyprus's cultural patrimony.

And the icons? Most, you would discover, went to Munich, where Aydin was said to have been greatly aided by the master forger called the Old Man. There a handful of dealers plied their trade, two or three less than honestly. Many things went to London, and some ended up in the hands of auctioneers. Stolen icons cannot be flogged on the market unless they have first been restored, and here the restorer Stavros Mihalarias, who is now an auctioneer in Athens—and who, incidentally, claims not to recall having acquired the British Museum's St. Peter from Michel van Rijn—would be one of your most valuable sources of information.

But there is little now that anyone can do to recover the hundreds of missing pieces. Every once in a while, a Cypriot visiting an icon exhibition in London will feel a tug at his heart as he recognizes the hand of some familiar Cypriot painter or recalls a glimmering iconostasis, half veiled by the incense of sorrowful memories, that perhaps bore the holy image now before him on the gallery wall. Last November, for instance, a certain icon of St. John Prodrome was removed from a sale at Sotheby's after protests from the Church of Cyprus, although Sotheby's maintained that the piece had legitimately entered the commercial sphere and that there was no indication that it was stolen. The Church of Cyprus, however, produced several affidavits from villagers bearing witness to its original place in the iconostasis of the Church of St. Paleosophos, in northern Cyprus. Lawyers for the Church of Cyprus soon learned that it had been consigned to Sotheby's by none other than Yanni Petsopoulos, and at a hearing before the High Court of Justice in London late last April he stated that he had indeed consigned it, on behalf of an unnamed Greek collector of exalted social standing. The Church's lawyers alleged that Petsopoulos had initially denied knowing the owner's name. The court ordered the piece to be delivered into the custody of a respected art shipper until rightful possession should be decided.

After the hearing in London, I telephoned Petsopoulos. "I did not lie to the Church's lawyers," he told me. "I told them that they had no case—that I wasn't the



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owner, and that his name didn't concern them. You know, this icon of St. John is possibly the single most publicized icon in the world." He reeled off a long, accurate list of the many galleries in which the icon had been shown, and identified as Cypriot, over the past decade. "I have good reason to believe that it is not stolen," he said, "but my question to the Church's lawyers is this: Why so much interest *now*? Why have they ignored the piece for over ten years?"

I asked him about his involvement in the Lysi deal.

"Well, first of all, I never offered the Lysi frescoes to Dumbarton Oaks," he replied, referring to the Indianapolis testimony of Gary Vikan, formerly a senior associate at that institution. "I merely asked Vikan for his advice. And Dikmen's cover story about how he had discovered the frescoes was by no means incredible, as Vikan seemed to suggest. As for the Kanakaria mosaics returned to Cyprus in 1984, absolutely no money was paid for them, and they were carried very carefully all the way to Cypriot hands."

And what about the most thrilling part of all the testimony in Indianapolis—the part in Walter Hopps's deposition where Petsopoulos, in his anger at Dikmen's supposed lies, throws a decanter into Dikmen's fireplace?

"It was a very acrimonious discussion," said Petsopoulos.

"But did you throw a decanter?" I persisted.

I heard him smother a laugh. "It was really very acrimonious. I'm sure that I threw many things."

Then, citing Savo's statement to Peg's lawyer, I asked him if it was true that a Montenegrin named Savo Kujundzic had retrieved from his house, in the summer of 1989, antiquities consigned to him by Aydin Dikmen.

"I have never had anything on consignment from Mr. Dikmen," he replied. "Many years ago, he sent me some photos of pieces, but they didn't interest me. And I don't know any Montenegrins at all." Petsopoulos thought for a moment or two, and then he added, gently, "I don't want to say that this Montenegrin was lying. Perhaps he was introduced to someone else named Petsopoulos."

Last February, Michael Kyprianou rose in the Greek Cypriot parliament to denounce Vassos Karageorghis for allowing more than fourteen thousand artifacts to be exported during his tenure as director of the Antiquities Department. "Those who were supposed to be the guardian angels of our cultural heritage signed it away," Kyprianou said. At a hearing that month, Kyprianou berated Karageorghis, who was present, for having declined to testify in Indianapolis. "Isn't it true that the American lawyer and I emphasized to you that you . . . should have come with us to America?" he asked.

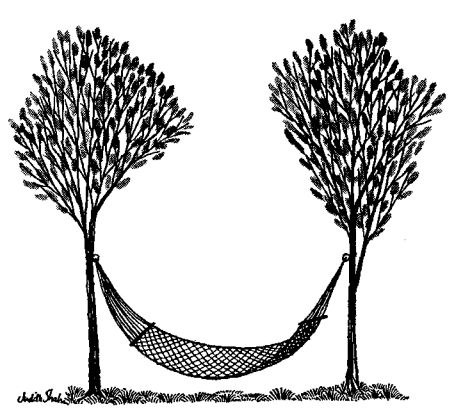
Karageorghis answered, "But that is why I told you that if you considered my presence necessary I would have gone."

"But we told you that your presence was necessary," Kyprianou said. "And you, sir, told me that you had to go to various universities and you could not postpone these trips. Isn't it true?"

"Yes. . . . I was not told that it would be the end of the world," Karageorghis replied.

DESPITE suggestions from several people that Savo Kujundzic was a miscreant of some sort, I never came across the slightest indication that he was. Of course, I remembered his claim to know the whereabouts of the Mummy of St. Lazarus—this hadn't enhanced his credibility—but when I asked Peg about it recently she said, "He was wrong about that—he told me so himself. Those are the bones of St. Barnabas. Savo isn't a Biblical scholar, you know."

Michel van Rijn, for his part, denied to me all Savo's allegations against him—most heatedly, the claim that he produced a pseudo Dikmen at the Geneva airport. As for Michel's own charges against his former bodyguards, Marko, Draža, and Hans—that they were involved in extortion—the Amsterdam police informed me that none of the three had ever been convicted, or even indicted, though a "racketeer" named Dujo had indeed been murdered in early 1991 in that city, by a person or persons unknown.



Peg had become really fond of Savo—perhaps too fond, I figured, to pay much heed to Ahmet's bold claim that the Montenegrin, in the early days of his association with her, had lied to her about visiting Cyprus and had pocketed the travelling funds she'd given him. So I called Savo once more, and told him Ahmet's story point blank—about the meeting being in Istanbul, not Cyprus, and about Ahmet's having to pay the bill at the Pera Palas—and as I finished I realized that Savo was moaning.

"Oh God, oh God!" he said, his voice pitched between despair and mad laughter. "Is true I go to Istanbul, yes. I remember is coming there one *clochard*, with not one penny, in thousand-year-old suit, seat all shiny, not one copper for food. Is coming with friend the museum director, who has no briefcase, only plastic bag from supermarket, to hold his proofs. For them I buy prepaid tickets, room in hotel, terrible Turkey food. Oh God, oh God! Tell this *clochard* from Savo to shut up!"

"But, Savo," I said, "what about Ahmet's statement that you never went to Cyprus—that you pocketed Peg's money for the trip?"

"Is not true, for sure. I was in Cyprus two, three months before Ahmet is coming out from jail. *Later*, I meet Ahmet, Mehmet, and shit-Aydin in Istanbul. I pay for everything! Aydin say, 'This is good people, I get good price for you,' but Ahmet say, 'I don't show all,' and Mehmet say, 'No proofs before money.' Mehmet visit me in Munich. He get from me twenty thousand dollars altogether."

"And these are the thousands of dollars you spent so you could sell the mosaics you have?"

"*Ja*. Aydin say, 'Buy nice clothes for Mehmet,' but what does Mehmet give me in exchange? Nothing. *Nothing!*"

The first time I ever talked to Peg, she told me how much she liked Aydin Dikmen. He was handsome, she said—he was charming. In that way in which we sometimes elide a person with his dress, especially if his dress is distinctive, Peg liked him for his way of presenting himself. "Beautiful suit, beautiful shoes, *beautiful* briefcase." He told her that he had long done business with the Greeks of Cyprus—he was infuriated by Leventis's

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and Karageorghis's claims not to know him—and he assured her that he would help her to win her case. He seemed heaven-sent, and she welcomed the aid that he promised. Then, slowly but surely, he clammed up.

A few weeks after I talked to Savo, I got a call from Peg. "I've sent Aydin a demand letter," she told me, sounding a little dejected. I thought for a moment that she had come to the conclusion that Aydin and his friends had lured her into a two-year wild-goose chase, but I soon saw that I was mistaken. "I don't dislike him," she said, sighing. "My action isn't punitive—it's compensatory. I sent copies to Savo and Ahmet."

"How much are you asking for?"

"Two and a half million. Enough to cover my debt and the interest and some other expenses. I told him he'd better pay up!"

"What was his reaction?"

"He hasn't answered my letter. But Ahmet told me he had to be pulled off the ceiling."

"Tell me, if you sue Aydin, are you going to claim that he knowingly sold you stolen goods?"

"Yes, that's one thing. But most of all that he wouldn't help me."

"Help you?"

"During the trial. He never came forward to testify about knowing Karageorghis and Leventis. And he never sent Ahmet to Indianapolis—he could have done that for me."

So Peg was travelling the same circle. She had never so much as temporarily suspended her belief in Dikmen's connection with Karageorghis and Leventis, even though both denied it and no real proof of such ties had ever been found. In trying to sue Aydin, moreover, she faced daunting practical problems. How would she find him? How would she pay her lawyers? And how credible a witness would she seem to a foreign court? If one could charitably dismiss from one's mind the thought that she may have knowingly bought stolen goods, wasn't it also true that she must somehow have known that she was being primed for an illicit deal? Much in her deposition and trial testimony suggested that in some perilously passive way she played along with Michel van Rijn and Bob Fitzgerald, unable to divine their stratagem but convinced that there was some reward in it for her. It seemed that the compartments in her mind had stopped communicating with each other, like those of a damaged submarine.

Peg tried many times to convince me that she had no feeling of having been manipulated. Only in hindsight did it appear that a scheme was being hatched. Take, for instance, the bogus bill of sale for a million two hundred thousand dollars. It had been presented to her out of the blue, she told me; it had quite surprised her at the time, but she had been prevailed upon to sign it.

At all events, Peg has lost a big lawsuit and a lot of money: she has a huge debt service; she is obliged by law to pay some of Cyprus's court costs; her house-gallery may be repossessed; and her good name has been hurt. Aydin Dikmen has not answered her demand letter, and she is preparing to take legal action against him. She feels ill done by. But most of all, perhaps, she is pining for her Archangel. "I still look at his photo every day," she told me. "It wrenched my heart out to say goodbye to him. I must have known him before, in some other world—we were friends, I know we were. Those haunting, magical eyes! I'll never forget the moment I found out who he was—I was screaming almost hysterically to a friend, 'He's an angel! An angel!' "

At Peg's, the cats still scamper about. There are Mendelssohn and Chopin scores on her piano. She is up to her ears in legal paper—every day she hunts for some brief or motion, some petition or exhibit—and I suppose that now and then, as she's shuffling through her files, her eye falls upon Michel's book about icons, the one with the melancholy saint on the cover. Inside (does she bother to reread it?), there is his inscription, penned in a very swash hand: "To Peg Goldberg. Everywhere in the world, God and the Devil are at war, and their battlefield is the heart of man. Yours, Michel." And scrawled underneath is a smiling sun that sends its rays across the white page.

—DAN HOFSTADTER

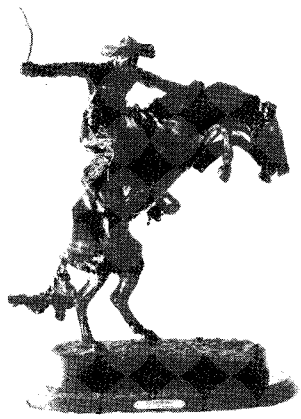
(This is the second part of a two-part article.)

•

Jeri Taylor, manager at Carroll Travel, said that travelers are booking flights not only to the popular travel locations such as Florida or the West Coast, but to some out of the way places like Montana or Buffalo.

—*New Britain (Conn.) Herald.*

They must be desperate.



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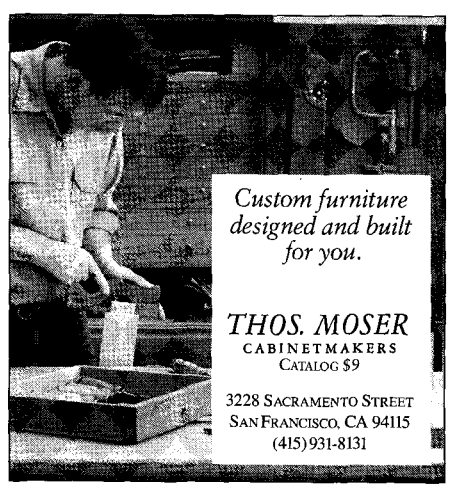

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THE ART WORLD

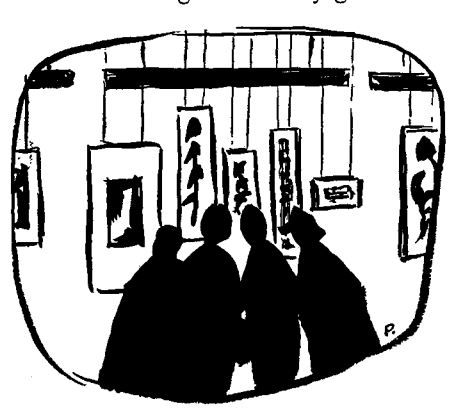
What Comes Naturally

I'VE been spending a lot of time lately trying to understand why I don't like Brice Marden's new pictures as much as I think I ought to. Marden's "Cold Mountain" series of paintings, drawings, and etchings, which went on view last October at the Dia Center for the Arts, on West Twenty-second Street, and remained there until the end of May, was the undisputed critical hit of this season's exhibitions of contemporary art. From Robert Hughes to Peter Schjeldhal, reviewers who normally can't agree on the closing hours of the Met agreed that Marden's new work was the big achievement of abstract painting in our time. Freely painted, "calligraphic" abstractions, his pictures were supposed to mark an unlooked-for rebirth of the main line of Abstract Expressionism, at a time when that style seemed as dead as vaudeville, and also to mark a return to honest picture-making after a decade of bad faith. Marden has pulled together a coalition of admirers that would be the envy of any American politician. He has the people who think that every new departure is necessarily good, the people who think that the only good departures are the ones that resemble old departures, and the pastel-adjective reviewers, who like any departure so long as it can be called "lyrical."

In some ways, it couldn't happen to a better painter: Marden is the real thing, and always has been. He is one of the few American abstract painters to whom the word "accomplished" can be applied without sounding like critic's cant: nearly thirty years ago, he set out to do one particular thing, did it well, and kept on doing it better each time out. What he did was make pictures that retained all the empirical, what-you-see-is-what-you-see virility of New York minimalism, and make that style not just beautiful but inarguably *lovely*—something much harder to do. Marden painted with the simplest possible means, to sublime effect. His pictures were often only bisected fields of flat, barely aerated colors—blacks and whites, or soft blues and greens—placed one above the other, like the fields on yachting flags. But they were not just absolutist-minded studies in reduction; his work was always about the relationships of its elements—oil-slick black set above transparent white, for example, or a single sheet of pale teal falling like a curtain to be met by a scumbled set of ivory marks, each pairing as sensuous as that of sand and sky or clear water and violets. It was this sensuousness that gave Marden's pictures a current of casual, worldly pleasure that radiated from beneath their matter-of-fact decisiveness. This side of his talent reached a peak of refinement in the "Grove Group," inspired by a series of trips to the Greek islands and exhibited last year at the uptown Gagosian Gallery. Veils and slabs and rungs of pale blues and greens and turquoises, they were essences of the Aegean, as intense as a *glace de viande*.

But then, as a number of articles have explained, Marden, feeling that his familiar style was turning into a decorator's style, decided, in an honorable tradition, to "break his hand"—to find some way of defeating his own stylishness. He began to work with three- or four-foot-long brushes of ailanthus twigs, so that he was literally distanced from the surface of his pictures, in a way that was intended to add a note of chance and unplanned incident to what had become a too secure, even a slick, manner. In making the arm's-length marks, Marden sensed a connection between this kind of drawing and the ancient Chinese calligraphic traditions, and called the new series "Cold Mountain," after a classical Chinese poet.

The drawings eventually grew into



a variety of paintings. There are small etchings, with rows of shaky imaginary ideograms piled up like multiplication tables; there are medium-sized gouaches, in which the ideograms begin to blossom into bigger biomorphs; and, finally, there are enormous oils, nine feet by twelve. It's on these largest pictures that the claims of Marden's majority rest. Against a tenderly painted, ghostly background of gray or green watercolorlike wash, a thick, almost jagged line slowly works its way, in limping stops and starts, across the canvas. Often, a second line is drawn in a pale color right above the first, and the juxtaposition of the two lines creates a space—makes a network of pockets and bulges—so that in the end the pictures look like a spiderweb woven by a large spider that had something else on its mind.

In the foolishly schematic but inevitable vocabulary of our time, these pictures seem a reaffirmation of "pure" painting, after the overheated, self-consciously "mediated" and overstuffed art of the eighties. And as a set of gestures in this local, political sense the paintings seem to me successful, and heartening; as a set of gestures in the timeless, decorative sense, they are much less so. "Slow-motion Pollock" is how one, not entirely derisive commentator described them, and that may help point to the problem, since slow-motion Pollock is a little like slow-motion stock-car racing—less an extension of unexplored possibilities than a confusion of the underlying concept. Marden's new pictures seem to have isolated the weakest aspects of automatic-pilot action painting—the readiness to make gesture do the work of real drawing, and the accompanying willingness to make bigness do the work of composition—without having much of the drive or rhythm or conviction that makes the best examples of that style soar.

On first view, Marden's new pictures appear sure and authoritative; on second and subsequent views, they become increasingly thin and, oddly, disingenuous. Picasso turning aside from drawing to take up wood carving; Matisse designing his last cutouts with a long pointer; Pollock giving up paintbrushes for paint cans—the problem is not that there are no honorable antecedents for this style but that there are too many. What Marden produces,

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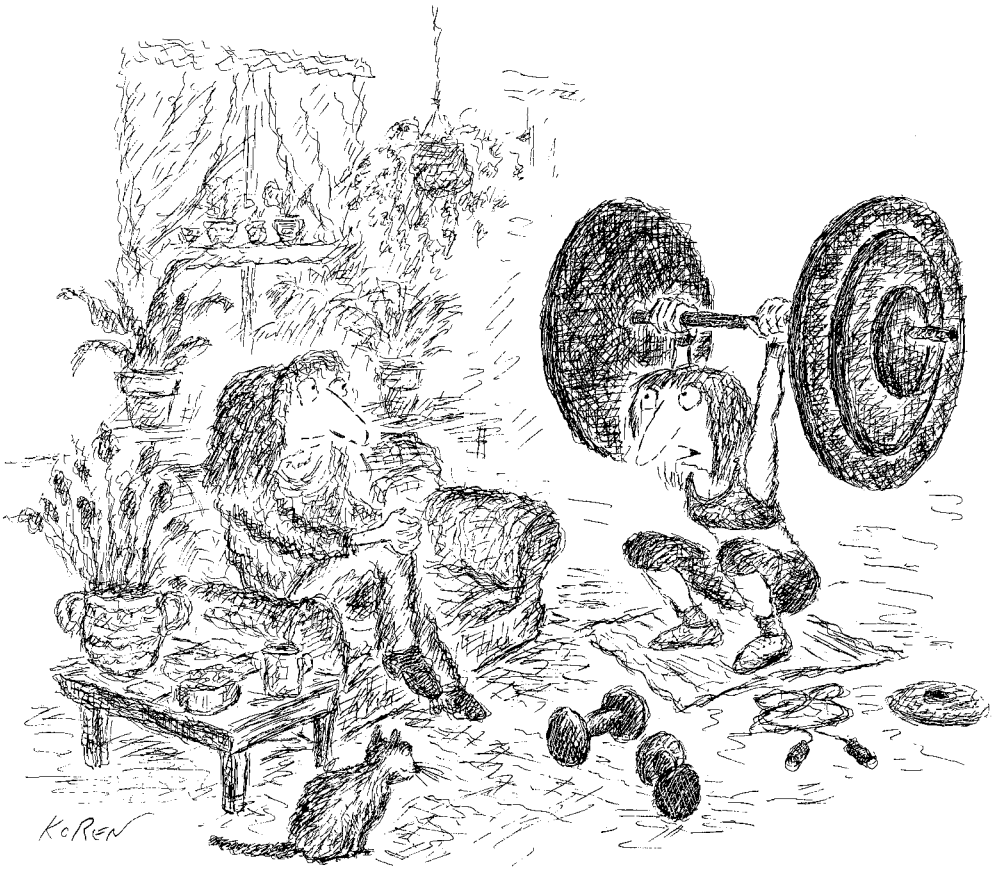
at such an expense of disabling effort, is already overfamiliar: the cursive, ostentatiously imperfect line that has been the proof of the artist's free hand at least since the middle of the nineteenth century—the modern rhetorical equivalent of the rolling eyes and pious slumps of Baroque saints.

The attempt to make the new pictures seem profound by connecting that broken line to Asian traditions is even more dubious. My grandfather, who worked in a produce market, once confided to me that "in the fish department the name Dover sole covers a multitude of sins." The word "calligraphic" has for a long time done similar work among abstract painters. It can mean a lively mark, an inward-turning mark, a scribble—any shaky line that doesn't depict anything in particular. True calligraphy, in the Asian tradition, is both simpler and more complicated—it's just handwriting, but handwriting raised to an art. In the catalogue of an exhibition devoted to Marden's work last spring at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, there is a revealing photograph of one of the "Cold Mountain" paintings placed beside a pair of scrolls by the Chinese calligrapher Zhang Zhengyu. Even those of us who can't read Chinese can sense in the scroll a coiled internal necessity and a decisiveness of hand—of meaning—that reduces the Marden painting to ornament. Chuck Close's recent portraits, in which each touch tries to transmit information while remaining unmistakably an expressive mark, are, without looking obviously "Oriental," much closer to real calligraphy than Marden's new pictures are. Marden's paintings almost have an element of Broadway chinoiserie: you can hear the triangles and gongs going off in the background.

The Abstract Expressionist painters did achieve a kind of calligraphic authority, on their own terms, in a way that Marden hasn't yet. But that's because even minor painters like Tomlin and Tobey worked with a much more desperate and explosive sense of what the hand could do, yet at the same time assumed a much tighter painterly grammar. Theirs was the kind of all-out style that only the overeducated can pull off—feeling bursting out from constraint. The difference between Tomlin or Tobey and Marden is like the difference between Parker, or even Coltrane, and contemporary New Age, live-from-the-Pyramids saxophone playing: the new stuff is free, but it's not running away from anything worth resisting—it's free, but not *driven*.

Compare Marden not just to Tomlin and Tobey but to Pollock, as one is asked to do again and again, and the thing that comes eventually to mind is how little calligraphy or gesture, or even drawing, there actually is in the best poured Pollocks. We are still hostage to the notion—imprinted now on two generations through Hans Namuth's photographs—that Pollock's "dripping" was the central, meaning-creating act of his work, and that makes it hard for us to grasp that his poured line was a way of getting an effect, rather than the effect itself. Pollock used a long, turning, unbroken line to produce the world-consuming effects he wanted. The marks that make up the pictures are splashy and can look uncontrolled, but that is a by-product of the process, not its point. In the end, they are oceanic, tonal pictures, enveloping rather than graphic. Marden didn't need to "go back to Pollock," because in the small but perfect atmospheres of his best "slick" pictures he was already alongside him.

In fact, the new, "expressive" pictures are so overlaid with self-conscious style that they're much less revealing of Marden's tetchy, rather Manet-like temperament than the old, supposedly taciturn ones are. Abstract pictures can absorb any amount of eccentricity, but the slightest touch of solemnity spoils the brew. (This is why Clyfford Still's pictures, with their jagged, mountainous silhouettes, now look only like a repository of a period's pieties, while Ad Reinhardt's pictures, which seemed at the time hardly more



"Things are still a little rough for me, and occasionally I lose hope and get depressed—but I'm getting stronger every day."

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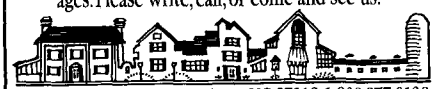
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than perverse jokes, continue to float in placid, cool authority.) Marden's new pictures sigh with the weight of being Art. The catalogue of the Boston show is evidence of the change, and is a little embarrassing to those of us who are Marden fans. It includes mostly unpersuasive comparisons of Marden's pictures with those of some art-historical heavyweights; a pure-black Marden rectangle is placed opposite a dark Manet study for the "Execution of the Emperor Maximilian," for instance. (The comparisons are unpersuasive not because Marden isn't worthy of the company but because he doesn't need the crutch.) The text is composed of a series of tributes to Marden. Patti Smith offers a kind of prose poem, apparently about a picture that Marden made in her honor (a black stripe, a gray stripe, a black stripe), with a glamorizing Mapplethorpe photograph not of Marden or the painting but of Patti Smith right beside it. John Yau contributes an exercise specked with pseudo-erudition: "The palpable colors of Brice Marden's paintings of the sixties and seventies are 'vivid,' a word derived from the Latin—*vividus*, full of life, lifelike, from *vivere*, to live." What this catalogue successfully conveys is the wildly inflated claims that have to be made for abstract art right now in order for it to seem to matter at all. It has to be shown to incorporate in stenographic form all previous painterly styles—to incorporate the whole world. You used to praise an abstract picture by showing how little it had in common with anything that had come before; now you praise it by showing how much familiar art, or covert realism, it manages to contain.

Of course, painters are no more responsible for the admirers they attract than ideas are responsible for the people who believe in them. But the lack of proportion in such writing nags: what good is abstract painting now if it needs this kind of propping up? Shorn of any story to tell, or of any credible spiritual universe to reveal, hasn't it become a mere relic of an old utopian hope? Although Marden's new paintings are praised as a humane alternative to the one-dimensional, politicized art that disfigures the art world these days, they seem, in a sense, a different stop along the same road. What's wrong with contemporary art isn't that it's politicized but that it's schematized. Too often, it offers just a set of flash cards evoking preset responses. The last few years have seen the collapse, as decisive and as final as any of the other great collapses of our time, of the old, historicist notion of a developing, progressive art—the notion that the story of art has a plot, and that the job of the artist is to get in on the right side of history. Now, for the first time in a very long while, there is the real possibility of seeing *pictures*—of liking them for better reasons than that, painted on Monday, they manage to imply Tuesday. As in the aftermath of so many of the great collapses, though, what we have is not a new freedom but a series of tribal squabbles—a stalemate in which an overblown expressionism is checked by an impotent political art, which is itself checked by a vitiated and rote lyricism.

It may be that nowadays in order to move us abstract pictures need, if not humor, then at least some admission of their own absurdity—expressed in a genuine awkwardness, or in an authentic disorder. Maybe that was always true. Certainly, studied, assured abstractions, like Marden's new pictures—painted with a full weight of self-conscious authority and art-historical reference—have tended to go a little dead in the long run, while the abstractions that wear well have usually been the peculiar or casual or obliquely expressive ones. This could almost be a rule: bad abstract pictures look like odalisques, good ones more like unmade beds.

—Adam Gopnik

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LETTER FROM LONDON

A FEW years ago, I was driving west out of London, sauntering down the middle lane of the M4 at no more than ten miles an hour over the speed limit, when two searchlights lit up my offside wing mirror. They turned, all too rapidly, into police motorcyclists. I was beginning to console myself on the unfairness of my random arrest when they growled past unheeding. They were far too busy sweeping the fast lane for the car they were escorting. It duly appeared in its swift bulk, pounding along at between *ninety and a hundred miles an hour*: a large black saloon flying a royal pennant on its bonnet. When the rear guard had passed, my companion and I speculated on the limo's occupant and the reason for such ostentatious speeding. The Queen late for a state lunch? Princess Anne late to feed her horses? The Queen Mum late for a gin-and-tonic? And so on. But the encounter also made me recall one of Prince Philip's obiter dicta: he once remarked in an interview that the Royal Family would "lose its dignity" if its members were caught in traffic jams like ordinary citizens.

Over the last few years, the Royal Family has shed quite a bit of its dignity, and the fault has not been that of its motorcycle outriders. The latest revelations, or allegations, or filthy gossip, about the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales may have induced disbelief, rage, pity, and schadenfreude, but they did not come out of a clear blue sky. Most of the recent domestic bulletins about the House of Windsor have been of matrimonial misfortune. There is a probably apocryphal story of a British matron watching Sarah Bernhardt play Cleopatra and commenting, "How very different from the home life of our own dear Queen." Until not long ago, the remark could be, and was, still applied waggishly to the stodgy, dull, decent, seemingly chaste House of Windsor. Not anymore. For a mother of four children to see the marriage of one of them break up is probably a statistical normality in present-day Britain; two looks like positive misfortune; three begins to argue that there is something seriously wrong with the family itself. When that woman is the Queen of England, the follow-up questions have a wider resonance.

The fact that Prince Charles himself has been afflicted with marital blight is particularly ironic. The British monarchy, which over the centuries has put its fair share of blackguards, adulterers, and madmen on the throne, and has endured mockery and criticism up to the severest censure of regicide, in 1649, has been enjoying for the last half century a remarkably placid and uncontested phase of its existence. One factor in this, even committed monarchists agree, has been genetic good fortune. The line of thinking goes as follows. Jolly lucky we got rid of that unstable and potentially ruinous Edward VIII, plus his foreign, fortune-seeking Mrs. Simpson, and traded him in for the solid, stamp-collecting George VI. Jolly lucky that his eldest daughter was the dutiful Elizabeth, and that we got her as Queen rather than the flighty Margaret, who fell in love with a divorced man, liked smoking cigarettes, and hung around with arty types. Jolly lucky, finally, that Charles, an earnest worrier, with a proper sense of his ancestry, is going to inherit, rather than the headstrong Anne, the larky Andrew, or the seemingly unmarriageable Edward. And, besides, we don't just get Charles, we also get Princess Di, the most popular woman in the country. How can the show not run and run?

The main allegations in "Diana: Her True Story," by Andrew Morton, formerly a *Daily Star* journalist and now a rich man, are: that the marriage of Charles and Di collapsed early and is currently a sham; that Di became acutely depressed and made five "suicide bids" (or, at least, pathetically frenzied cries for help, such as throwing herself against a glass display cabinet and cutting herself with the serrated edge of a lemon slicer), which Charles declined to take seriously; that she suffered from bulimia nervosa for many years of her marriage and was treated by a consultant psychiatrist; that she does not believe she will ever become Queen, an apprehension confirmed by astrologers she has consulted; that Charles is a cold and unsupportive husband, who throughout his marriage has continued his long-standing "friendship" with Mrs. Camilla Parker Bowles despite his wife's protests and jealousy; and that when, after years of painful matrimony, the Princess asked her husband "But did you ever love me?" he is said to have replied "No."

If these disclosures were merely the

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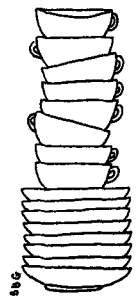
backstairs chatter of a disgruntled parlormaid, as used to be the case with "royal revelations," they might have made no more than a deniable early-summer scandal. But Morton was allowed to tape interviews with one of Diana's sisters and her younger brother; he talked to her former flatmates and Chelsea friends; the publisher of the book was sold eighty previously unseen photos by her father, Earl Spencer; and a slice of profits from the venture will go to a drug-abuse charity of which Diana is patron. In other words, this is as close to "Diana: My Story" as we are likely to get; and if the Princess now finds her life sensationalized and its emphases skewed, then that is the price celebrities often pay for not writing their own stuff.



Morton's book, as serialized in the *Sunday Times* before publication, was received with fascination, wrath, and a large amount of cant, not least from fellow-journalists. The day after the first episode appeared, Donald Trelford, editor of the rival Sunday *Observer*, was quoted as saying of Morton's book, "It looks like trash to me. I can't stand stories about Royals who can't answer back. I don't know if it's true or false." But such sentiments, however worthy, had bowed to the exigencies of journalism the previous day. The *Sunday Times*' front page had been dominated by a color photo of a rather melancholy Diana in her finery, beneath the headline DIANA DRIVEN TO FIVE SUICIDE BIDS BY "UNCARING" CHARLES. The *Observer's* was dominated by an even larger color photo, of a grim-looking Princess at the wheel of her car, beneath the headline DEPRESSION "DROVE DIANA TO FIVE SUICIDE BIDS." Devotees of the codes and conventions of British headline writing might have noticed the placing of the quotation marks, which separate those parts of the story which are only alleged to be true from those which the newspaper itself endorses: so the *Observer* was confirming the depression but hedging its bets on the suicide bids, whereas the *Sunday Times* was confirming the suicide bids but hedging its bets on whether or not Charles was a heartless husband. The average reader, of course, would come away from each front page with exactly the same impression of what had happened, and probably the same percentage of conviction as to the truth of the story.

But, whether the other papers were sniffy-nosed, emulative, or spoiling, none managed, or perhaps tried very hard, to discredit the story in the first few weeks; they were too busy selling newspapers. Nor were there any denials from the Palace. So with the question "Is It True?" on hold, attention turned to "What Does It Portend If True?" and "Should the Bastards Have Been Allowed to Do It?" In constitutional terms, the story portends very little. The couple could separate, they could divorce, Prince Charles could even marry again, and there would be no constitutional crisis. If Henry VIII is anything to go by, he could marry again to his heart's content; the only disadvantage would be that he couldn't remarry in church, and therefore couldn't act as Supreme Governor of the Church of England. So the portents were all more local: to do with the future stability and popularity of the monarchy if its current juve lead withdrew from the production.

This left the question "Should the Bastards Have Been Allowed to Do It?" Though a regulation amount of smarmy humbug oozed from the *Sunday Times*, it was exceeded by the hypocrisy in some of the responses. If the message is bad, shoot the messenger. There were widespread denunciations of gutter-press intrusiveness, although the story first appeared as a book, from which a broadsheet serialization was made. There were renewed calls for a law of privacy, a subject that thereby climbed higher up the reformists' agenda than more fundamental matters of government secrecy and freedom of information. There was the reminder that the Royals could sue for libel. (Minor ones, like Lord Lindley, Princess Margaret's son, have already done so.) The Archbishop of Canterbury burbled away in disapproval. So did the Press Complaints Commission, a rather ludicrous body set up by the industry out of the fear that if it didn't regulate itself the government would come in and do the job less indulgently. The commission condemned what it called "an odious exhibition of journalists dabbling their fingers in the stuff of other people's souls in a manner which adds nothing to legitimate public interest in the situation of the heir to the throne." This stricture was not treated everywhere with proper *gravitas*, given that two of the commission's members are the editor of the *News of the World*, historically the market leader in Sunday salacity, and the editor of the *Daily Star*, whose front page that very day had finger-dabbled, with the headline CAMILLA'S ROYAL OK, claiming that "Di's love rival," Mrs. Parker Bowles, had won a "big smile" from the Queen at a polo match.

There was even a droll side tiff between Mr. Andrew Neil, editor of the *Sunday Times*, who had fronted the story much more than Mr. Morton himself, and Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, former editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*. The two had previously confronted each other in the libel court, when the self-consciously old-style Worsthorne had been obliged to pay the self-consciously new-style Neil a thousand pounds for implying that when Mr. Neil had squired a certain Pamella Bordes around town he knew that she was not just a glamorous model and an ex-House of Commons researcher but also a high-class tart. Sir Peregrine, who despite his parodically English name is of Belgian extraction, and who despite his chivalrous defense of the decencies of life was one of the first people to use the "F" word on television, returned to the subject of Andrew Neil with gleeful disgust. "Twice last week," he wrote in his *Sunday Telegraph* column, "have I had to see Mr. Neil on television. It is not quite a case of 'see Mr. Neil and die' but see Mr. Neil and throw up. Has there ever been a more confusing face? With an expression half-bovine and half sheep-like he stares out of the screen in such a way as to leave us all uncertain whether he wants to cut our throats or lick our boots." It is true that Mr. Neil is not exactly a looker, but connoisseurs of comic physiognomy would do well not to bypass the flamboyant Sir Peregrine: in any Daumier series, he could safely model for the Languid Epicure. As for Miss Pamella Bordes, she is a good example of how the lives of celebrities intertwine. I was in Delhi this February, and, seeking conversation with a taxi-driver, I remarked that Princess Di happened to be in town, too. (She had visited the Taj Mahal and pronounced it "a very healing experience"—a remark that made no sense at the time but a little more in retrospect.) The driver was indifferent to the Princess's visit and

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proclaimed himself much keener on Pamella Bordes, the famous model, who was also visiting Delhi. Our conversation took off when I shyly confessed that I had myself met Miss Bordes, and even shaken her hand. I did not mention that at the time she was in the company—how the names come around again—of Mr. Donald Trelford.

A further question that the moralistic harrumphers chose not to answer was this: what if the "dabbling in other people's souls" is actually connived in by the so-called victims? It may be a well-known fact that the Royal Family, as Mr. Trelford reminded us, "can't answer back"; but, like most well-known facts, this one is partly untrue. For a start, Buckingham Palace and its coronetted outposts have a very large slice of Fleet Street—including Sir Peregrine Worsthorne—already in the position of thrilled obeisance. The Royal Family may not come to the front door and give interviews, but it carefully chooses what to throw in its dustbins, confident that they will be rootled through before dawn. Princess Di seems to have given the Morton story tacit approval before publication; subsequently, she gave it active encouragement. For instance, on the Wednesday after the news broke she telephoned her old friend Carolyn Bartholomew (one of Morton's sources) and invited herself round that evening. Shortly afterward, five newspaper picture desks and one royal photographer were alerted and told to be outside the Bartholomews' house at eight-fifteen. The Princess arrived, spent forty-five minutes with her friend, and then lingered on the doorstep long enough for every snapper to get his picture. The next morning, the Bartholomews spoke openly to journalists about the visit. Now, this may not technically be a press conference, but it goes as near as royal protocol allows, and probably nearer. To take another example: last summer, the tabloids discovered that the Princess was spending her thirtieth birthday in a surprisingly subdued and Charles-less manner. "Friends of Prince Charles" had told gossip columnists that the Prince had offered her a birthday party but she had refused; at about the same time, news began to leak of the Princess's friendship with a certain major. One theory is that Diana used the Morton conduit as a way of replying to "Friends of Prince Charles." More generally, she might be seen as appealing over the heads of Palace apparatchiks to her loyal British public, making a cry for help on a national scale.

The tabloids do, it is true, frequently behave in a disgusting manner; they define the phrase "the public interest" as meaning "whatever the public happens to be interested in, particularly sex." The feeding frenzy of paparazzi, the heaving shoal of photographers eager for a snap of misery or a surprise bikini shot do not constitute a group overtly concerned with the sensitivities of their subjects; nor should we imagine that Mr. Morton is unconcerned with financial reward or Mr. Neil indifferent to a thumping rise in circulation (two hundred and ten thousand extra copies for the first installment of his serialization). But the image of the Royal Family as mute manipulatees is far from the truth. For most of the time, the Palace successfully works a pliant and monarchistic press. Few complained when the popular newspapers a decade ago built up Charles and Diana's courtship and marriage in the most treacly, sycophantic, and, it now seems, mendacious fashion: the Cinderella Princess, the Romance of the Century, and all that guff. Morton offers a few corrective details about that supposedly enchanted time. Before the wedding, Diana discovered that Charles was offering Camilla Parker Bowles a bracelet with their self-given nicknames Fred and Gladys on it, which made her discuss with her sisters the possibility of breaking off the engagement. On her honeymoon, she saw photos of her "love rival" fall out of her husband's diary, and noticed a pair of cufflinks, with two "C"s intertwined, that had been given to Charles by Mrs. Parker Bowles. Even during her engagement, she had begun to display symptoms of bulimia, which were put down to prenuptial nerves. This may all be intrusive tittle-tattle, which the nation's newspaper readers shouldn't have the right to know. But if there is a choice between happy lies and sad truths, which do the more harm? And the sad truths, when they inevitably arrive, appear sadder because nobody sought to curb the pornographic panegyrics in 1981, to moderate the press's mawkish epithalamia.

A THUMBNAIL guide to the current fortunes and popularity of the Royal Family—or, at least, of its

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most visible members—would go something like this:

Queen Mother. Top Royal. The nation's favorite granny. Gracious, smiling, professional, still carries off pastel colors even at an advanced age.

The Queen. Popular, respected, thought to be "good at her job." Suspected of having a secret sense of humor. As she has got older, she has been less mocked for her tweediness, for her high voice and low dogs. General attitude among skeptics: if we've got to have a monarch, she seems to fit the bill better than anyone else.

The Duke of Edinburgh. Not much loved, though not much disliked. Given to making ducal gaffes, like being overheard on an Eastern tour referring to "slitty-eyed" Orientals. This tends to confirm prejudice among fans and critics equally.

Princess Margaret. Less in the public eye nowadays. Regular supplier in her day of emotional drama—Peter Townsend, Lord Snowdon, divorce, Mustique, Roddy Llewellyn, etc. Now a neutral figure. Popular with the tobacco industry, no doubt.

Prince Charles. Provokes ambivalent reactions. No longer the gauche youth with sticking-out ears who played the cello. But what is his role as he waits in limbo, knowing that he can become what he was born for only by the death of his mother? He supports organic farming, talks to plants, dislikes modern architecture, is a disciple of the Jungian trekker Laurens van der Post. Bit of an odd fish, who was humanized for the nation by his marriage to Diana. Now whither? Will he be seen as just another off-beam aristo who didn't know how to make his wife happy?

Princess Di. Fairy-tale princess, virginal, sweet. Frequently called herself "as thick as a plank" in early appearances. Suspected initially of not taking her royal status seriously enough, not paying her dues in return for the treats, but then buckled down, and after she shook hands with AIDS sufferers her standing was fully restored. Now largely pitied for her plight, but who is to blame? The royal system? The journalistic rat pack? Her own lack of psychological hardiness?

Princess Anne. For years, disliked as haughty. Once told press photographers to "naff off," thus popularizing the euphemistic phrase, which she may have used in the full original. Was married to Captain Mark Phillips, known as Fog, because he was thick and wet. Marriage dissolved. Perhaps the only Royal with actively rising popularity, after work for the Save the Children Fund. Now perceived as mature, industrious, her own woman. Expected to remarry.

The Duke of York and *Fergie*. Known variously as the Duke and Duchess of Yob (this from a regular *Times* columnist) and, for their contented-looking chubbiness, the Duke and Duchess of Pork. Builders of a large and vulgar ranch-style house. He a naval officer and couch potato, she an enthusiastic consumer of royalty's perks: she likes the skiing, the travel, and the writing of fatuous children's books about an anthropomorphized helicopter called Budgie. She untraditionally accepts royalties on her literary output, and in late June signed a TV-and-merchandising deal, which, according to industry sources, could net her as much as three million pounds. Briefly popular after their marriage, the couple are now officially separated and held in low esteem.

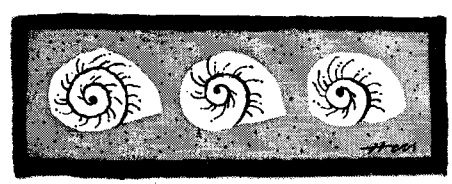
Prince Edward. The youngest child, but already balding. Joined the Marines but didn't stay the course; was found a job instead by Andrew Lloyd Webber (recently knighted). Suspected of artistic leanings and possible unmanliness. Has denied that he is gay. Not much public rating.

Duke of Kent (the Queen's cousin). Mason. Recently photographed in his apron. Not much else is known.

Duchess of Kent. Wife of above. Has rather ethereal graciousness; thought to suffer mood-related problems. Only appears at Wimbledon fortnight.

Princess Pushy. Nickname (supposedly affixed by Queen) for Princess Michael of Kent. Married to an obscure man with beard (also a Mason). Foreign divorcée who makes Fergie seem austere and self-denying in her attitude toward the perks of royalty. Writes books that bear dubious similarities to other people's books on the same subject. Positively unpopular.

Given this colorful dramatis personae, it's tempting to think of the Royal Family as a supersoap, Britain's longest-running TV export—the PBS hit that outgrossed "Brideshead Revisited."



But the Royals are not played by actors; they merely (however hammily at times) play themselves. Equally, comparisons with international stars like Dietrich or Sinatra or Liz Taylor, which are closer in terms of money, perceived glamour, and distance from reality, are misconceived. With figures like these, it is always possible to go back to the original performances from which the legend derived—to say that So-and-So acted or sang badly or well. With the Royals, there is no original talent that gave rise to their myth—simply the myth itself, which arises from the awful luck of being born or marrying into this extremely rich, well-connected, landowning family. They cannot do, they can only be; so mythic reality is all they can have for us.

And also, presumably, much of what they have for themselves. If we try to imagine what it must be like to be a Royal, we usually stop at the rewards and the inconveniences: on the one hand, the tax-free status and the ability to swish past in the fast lane; on the other, the nuisance of having the plebs stare at you, take photographs, and feel that they have a stake, however small, in your life. But imagine what such an existence must do to your sense of identity. You don't have anything like a job, though you may make the odd speech (usually written by someone else) and open the occasional factory. You have a semblance of power but no reality of power, and a shivering memory of what happened to your ancestors who governed too greedily. You are expected to be non-controversial, while knowing that your slightest preference, for primrose yellow in a summer frock, or for domestic-revival over post-brutalist architecture, will be heeded as if it were an addendum to the Ten Commandments. You travel the world like an animated shopwindow dummy advertising the unique, the mysterious product of Britishness. You are fêted and grovelled to and kept out of traffic jams. But in a sense you do not exist: you are what others decide that you are, you are only what you seem to be. And therefore you depend for your existential reality on the whole mythmaking, knee-bending, lie-telling business of promotion and packaging, on the Buckingham Palace spin doctors and the megaphonic exaggerations of the media.

You are, for instance, a rather gawky, shy, big-nosed girl from a posh family, not very bright, with no obvious fash-

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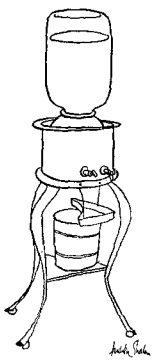
ion sense and with a taste for Barbara Cartland novels; you are, perhaps, one of the last virgins of your age in the country. (If you are not, someone will later find out and publish the fact.) You meet an equally gawky, big-eared boy, also from a posh family; he is older than you, rather serious-minded, not a spectacular wow with girls, and he just happens to be the heir to the throne. Therefore, and immediately, you become a fairy princess and fashion icon; you are fifty per cent of the Romance of the Century. True, there are disadvantages, since you are inspected every moment of the day, inspected even by the royal gynecologist for your fitness to produce new young Windsors. But you have been transmuted from an unformed Chelsea girl who likes teaching small children into the bearer of a vast weight of the nation's emotional overload. Some people see in you a perfect example of the tremendous thing they hope will happen to them; others, for whom the business of love and marriage went wrong or is old history, are fiercely consoled by the fact that it went right for you. You have stepped not out of but into the world of a novel by Barbara Cartland—who, just for symmetry, happens to be your step-grandmother.



So what do you do then if things start to go wrong? There is nothing in the myth book to fit your case. It seems to contain only items such as Royal Romance of the Century, Prince Weds Commoner, Princess Gives Up Unsuitable Suitor Out of Duty, King Abdicates for Love of Foreign Divorcée, and so on. You can have Triumph or Tragedy, or (better still) Tragedy that becomes Triumph. What you can't have is the banality of: My husband doesn't understand me, he's still seeing his old girlfriend, he's stuffy and doesn't want to have fun, my marriage is emotionally like lots of other people's marriages. The myth book has something about a Princess in a Gilded Cage, but such princesses tend to be liberated by handsome troubadours who help them fly the coop. The trouble with Prince and Princess Together in a Gilded Cage is that it's far too close to Marital Tiffs at No. 24 Laburnum Drive. Less than the stuff of myths.

The problem for the modern monarchy is how to hold in balance the demands of myth and ordinariness. The Queen is no longer seen as God's appointee; her role as Defender of the Faith is marginal, her position as Head of the Commonwealth probably less influential than that of non-playing captain of a Davis Cup team. Yet she and her family are wanted by a majority of the population; their presence, and their continuity, are considered a defining mark of the nation. Republicanism remains a spindly growth, and the low regard in which politicians are held confirms many people in their view that the Head of State should not be just another elected official. So the main danger to the monarchy is that of auto-destruction—if it flaunts its cash, enjoys its perks too openly, fails to look useful, or seems too fallibly ordinary for the survival of its own myth.

When I was growing up, the Royal Family still operated as a moral and domestic exemplar for most of Her Britannic Majesty's subjects. This function is currently in abeyance. You could try to argue that Elizabeth's children are showing how democratically close to ordinary people they are by their ability to screw up their own lives; but that would be sophistry. Part of the unspoken deal between the Royals and the populace is that the Royals, in return for privilege, wealth, and adoration, must occasionally be seen to suffer, or give the appearance of suffering; they must also indicate from time to time that they are subject to burdensome duty, to long-term conditions and restrictions that the rest of us do not envy. They can't be seen to wallow in the benefits and then walk away when things get sticky. Therefore, the best scenario for the Royal Family—at least, the one that will best enhance its durability—is for Diana to stay with her husband and be seen to be making a painful go of it; for the Duke and Duchess of Pork to call off their separation and develop a sudden interest in charity work; for Prince Edward to make a tactical marriage; and for Princess Pushy to take the veil. Otherwise, the Royal Family will quickly decline into mere illustrators of what is known in advertising jargon as an aspirational life style: this is how we plebs could and would live, had we the luck, the history, the tax breaks. Whether this would be a strong enough philosophical justification for the House of Windsor's continuance is doubtful. —JULIAN BARNES

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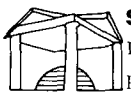

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WHEN the news of this city was dismal, as it often has been in the last couple of years, New Yorkers whose hearts leap up at the thought of spectacles and balloons and cheering crowds could console themselves with the reminder that in July, 1992, the city would play host to two grand parties. One would be the Democratic National Convention, at Madison Square Garden, beginning July 13th. Last spring, Newt Gingrich, the Republican whip in the House of Representatives, expressed great satisfaction over the Democrats' choice of New York for their Convention—a choice that had been encouraged by Ron Brown, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who was raised in Harlem. The Democratic coalition—"essentially big-city machines, liberal lawyers, left-wing activists, and political incumbents"—was "so out of whack with the country at large" that it was important "to pin them to who they are," Gingrich said. "When Ron Brown convinced them to come to New York, it was perfect." Dan Quayle, who may be the most often quoted Vice-President in American history, last month expressed similar approval of the Convention site. Denouncing Democratic liberals, he said, "We must not let them do to America what they have done to the people of New York," and described this city as "the perfect site for the Convention, almost as if they are determined to return to the scene of the crime."

The other big July party here was the celebration of the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World. Some may have thought it curious that an international commission should have chosen this city as the locale for the anniversary commemoration, since, of course, Columbus never came near New York; by most historical judgments, he reached landfall on the island of Quisqueya, part of which is now the Dominican Republic. Dominicans were prominent in the news during the weekend of the quincentennial, but not in connection with Columbus's landing. The highlight of the six-day party honoring Columbus came on July 4th, with the stately parade up and then down the Hudson River of thirty-four Tall Ships—three-quarters of all those in the world and the largest number ever gathered in one place. The last time the Tall Ships and the Democratic Convention played here within a few days of each other was in July, 1976, when the ships were part of the celebration of the nation's bicentennial. Sixteen years ago, the twin events had seemed to be a signal that in spirit, at least, the city had emerged from the grip of the fiscal crisis of that era, which had almost forced New York into bankruptcy. The lead story in the *Wall Street Journal* this July 6th detected similar upbeat developments when, once again, the Tall Ships and the Democrats came here in the same month. The main headline was "HAVING HIT BOTTOM, NEW YORK CITY BEGINS A SLOW TURNAROUND." (The headline concerning the Convention, however, was a grudging "NICE PARTY IF NO ONE'S KILLED"; and the line "Back from the Dead," above the main head, startled some New Yorkers, who hadn't understood that their former condition was terminal.) The two grand events were welcome here not only because they would raise local morale but because it was assumed that they would be a big boost for tourism; tourists contribute nearly ten billion dollars a year to the city economy, and there was a fear that, in a time of recession, they would just stay home.

Another happy aspect was that Mayor David Dinkins, who is even more celebrated than most politicians for a love of parties, could count on being invited to make an appearance onstage at both the Convention and the quincentennial. At the opening of the Parade of Sail, the master of ceremonies, Walter Cronkite, referred to the ethnic diversity of the sponsors of the Op Sail ships (they came from thirty-one countries) and asked, "Where better to celebrate than in New York, where so many different ethnic groups live side by side?" Dinkins, speaking next, called America, and New York as a part of it, "that great multi-ethnic experiment," and he observed, as he had in his inaugural speech on January 1, 1990, that his ancestors had arrived here, "whipped and chained," on slave ships. Taking note of the Native Americans who have fiercely objected to the honoring of Columbus (several hundred such protesters were at that moment marching on City Hall, shouting "Christopher Columbus, you can't hide! We charge you with genocide!"), the Mayor told the huge assemblage, "Irrespective of whether your ancestors were already here, irrespective of which ships they came on, we're all in the same

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boat now." Dinkins, who wore a white blazer and a natty blue yachting cap for the quincentennial event, had been looking especially cheerful at the beginning of that weekend, and not only because of all the social events that lay ahead. On July 2nd, *Newsday* had published a poll indicating that forty-one per cent of New Yorkers had a favorable opinion of him, which was twelve points above his standing in a March *Newsday* poll. And although his negative rating was forty-six per cent, that was a vast improvement over the March downside number, which was fifty-eight per cent. The boost in his standing was widely credited to gratitude that this famously volatile city had remained relatively quiet after the Rodney King verdict, in Los Angeles. Dinkins had won a close election in 1989 because of the conviction of many New Yorkers that he would be a healing influence at a time when ethnic and racial relations here were painfully raw. Within a few hours after his quincentennial appearance, however, outbreaks of violence against members of his police force in Washington Heights, a mostly Dominican section of Manhattan, provided a grim reminder of how far the multi-ethnic experiment here still had to go. "RAGE!" was the headline on the front page of the *Post* on July 7th—the same headline that had run on the front page of the *Daily News* two months earlier, during the Los Angeles riots.

Around nine on the night before the party in honor of Columbus, three plainclothes policemen, including one named Michael O'Keefe, had been near 162nd Street and Broadway, in Washington Heights, pursuing their usual assignment—that is, going after drug dealers in the area, much of which resembles an open-air drug market. As the Police Department described matters later, the three had seen José García, a twenty-four-year-old recent immigrant from the Dominican Republic, adjust his jacket, had concluded that he was carrying a gun, and had begun to follow him. In 1990, García, a part-time clerk in a bodega, pleaded guilty to the possession of a small amount of cocaine and was sentenced to probation. O'Keefe has a reputation for being physically rough on drug dealers in the neighborhood, and there were rumors that

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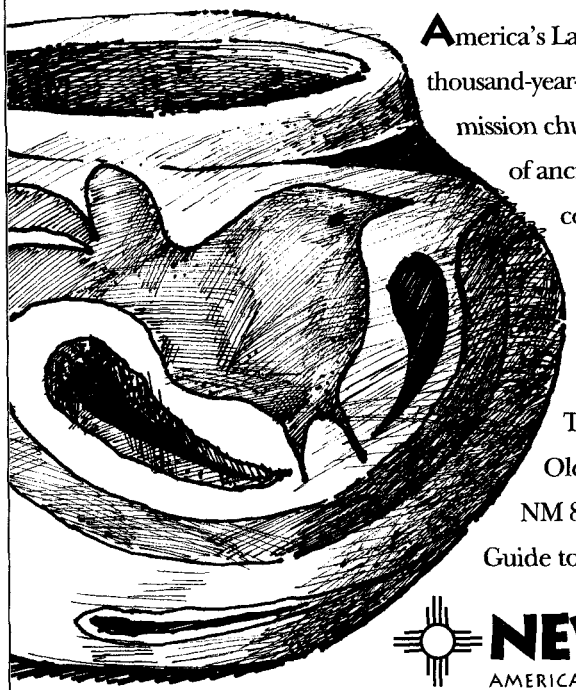

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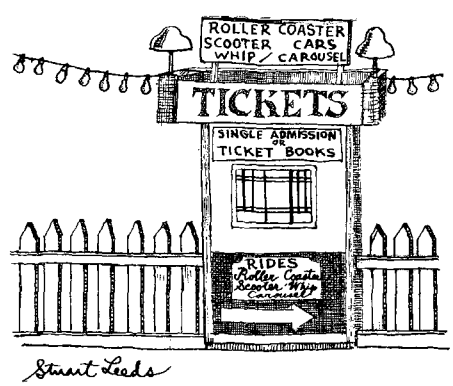
he had been known to shake dealers down, but, as the Police Department pointed out, none of these accounts have been substantiated. (If he should go to trial, the prosecution will surely try to work in references to a previous O'Keefe court appearance. Last year, a Supreme Court judge ruled to suppress testimony that O'Keefe gave in a case against an alleged drug dealer. The judge held that he had been "acting on a hunch," that there was no "credible evidence" that, as O'Keefe had testified, the suspect had thrown a bag of cocaine to the ground, and that the officer had had no "credible reason for pursuing . . . and forcibly seizing and arresting" the suspect.) On the night of July 3rd, the two other cops peeled off after another apparent criminal while O'Keefe followed García. No one has come forward to say that he was resisting arrest, yet friends of García say that O'Keefe pulled him into the empty lobby of a building. A few minutes later, García was dead, having been killed by two shots, one in the stomach, one in the back. After the shooting, O'Keefe produced a .38-calibre revolver and said that García had been carrying it. According to the city's chief medical examiner, an autopsy showed that the death was a homicide. O'Keefe called in sick on the days that followed, and a week after the killing neither the police nor the Manhattan District Attorney's office had questioned him about it. Raymond Kelly, the first deputy commissioner of the department, had weighed in with his support, calling O'Keefe "an aggressive, active, and good officer." Kelly is the man designated by Police Commissioner Lee Brown to conduct an impartial investigation into charges of corruption in the department.

Every so often in this city, a black or Hispanic person dies while he is in the hands of the police, and often there is credible evidence to demonstrate that the police acted prudently. Sometimes there is not, however, and the department or the courts allow the policeman to go free anyway. On the streets of Washington Heights during the hot and humid days after the murder, stories of such injustices—and of what was seen as the latest of them—were told over and over, and there were demonstrations at which García's neighbors demanded justice, shouting "*Policía asesino!*"

On Monday, July 6th, Dinkins sent into Washington Heights the emissaries from his office who had helped keep neighborhoods cool during the Los Angeles troubles. That afternoon, he visited García's family in Washington Heights. A day later, he invited them to Gracie Mansion, and assured them that the investigation of García's death would be thorough and fair. Monday evening, three elected officials—City Councilman Guillermo Linares, who represents the area, and is the first Dominican member of the council; Councilman Stanley Michels, who also represents part of the district; and Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger—joined members of the community for a candlelight march to a neighborhood church in García's memory. However, some Dominican leaders near the head of the line decided to march instead on the Thirty-fourth Police Precinct, out of which O'Keefe works, and which is one of ten in the city that are currently under investigation by the United States Attorney's office because of the corruption charges. The police blocked their way, and after that the riot was on. A crowd of about a thousand people surged through the neighborhood, throwing bottles at police. Shots were fired at a police helicopter overhead. Seventy-five cars were overturned and burned, along with garbage cans and other objects in the streets. There was some looting of stores, and three small buildings were torched. On television, the troubles in Washington Heights were a national story, often upstaging the economic summit meeting in Munich. The sight of hundreds of people running and flames leaping high was bound to remind anyone who saw it of the events in California this spring. However, Washington Heights was luckier than South Central Los Angeles. No one here got pulled out of a car and beaten. There was no random firing at individuals. Whole blocks of the neighborhood were not destroyed. One man, besides García, died—a twenty-nine-year-old Dominican whom police had chased to the roof of a six-story building, and who either was pushed over the edge by the cops (according to members of the community) or "lost his footing" (according to the police).



Mayor Dinkins had looked forward to spending the week after the Fourth making genial appearances at formal events marking the end of the quincentennial and the preliminaries of the Democratic Convention, with time off to attend a July 7th fund-raiser for his 1993 mayoral campaign. Instead, at eleven-thirty Monday night he went on a Spanish-language television station, saying, through an interpreter, "It is necessary to remain calm," and, in a blue warmup jacket, he spent much of the week out among the people, trying to quiet the disturbances in Washington Heights. He said often—and no doubt sincerely—that his concern was for the community. Still, it would be a terrible blow if the troubles went on so long that Democratic delegates and friends and relatives who had been planning to come with them were too alarmed to make the trip, thus spoiling the city's bet (twenty million dollars in city funds was invested in the Convention) that they would have such a good time they would spread the word back home that New York was a wonderful place for tourists. At least once a day, he walked the pavements of Washington Heights, sometimes joined by John Cardinal O'Connor.

The sight of these two senior citizens—the Cardinal is seventy-two, and Dinkins turned sixty-five on July 10th—trying to reason with throngs of people half or a third their age (Latinos are the youngest of all local ethnic groups), and earnestly insisting to often doubting faces that they totally understood the residents' anger and frustration, was a reminder that the question of whether people can get along may involve differences not only between races but between generations. Even more troublesome on the Washington Heights scene was language. Bill Lynch, Dinkins' deputy mayor for policy, spent most of his time that week in Washington Heights, where, he explained to reporters, keeping things calm was much harder than in other city crises because of "the strong lan-

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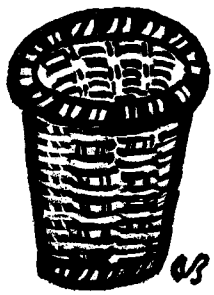
guage barrier." That problem is likely to arise even more often in the future. In the period from 1982 to 1989, the five countries that contributed the most legal immigrants to this city (in which a quarter of all residents were born somewhere else) were the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, China, Guyana, and Haiti. The language problem led to a small embarrassment for the Mayor. A meeting with the Washington Heights community on July 7th was interrupted by a young woman who, referring to García, shouted in Spanish, "They shot him like a dog!" It was worse than shooting a dog, she added, since Americans "respect their dogs, but they don't respect their Dominicans." The ever-polite Mayor, not having understood a word she said but apparently admiring her fervor, applauded. At the same meeting, looking unutterably sad, he said to his Latino constituents, "I promise you justice. I beg you for peace."



Some measure of trouble continued in the Heights for several days. Six days after García's death, it was still a front-page story in the local papers, including the *Times*. A thousand policemen were on guard each night—a budget-buster that could cut into hoped-for benefits from a big tourist influx. An editorial in *El Diario*, the local Spanish-language daily, said of the relationship of the people who live in Washington Heights and the cops who are assigned there (many of whom live in the suburbs), "They feel and act like an army of occupation in a conquered province." Five days before the Convention's start, Heights residents were still marching past the scene of García's shooting; the figure of a policeman was hanged in effigy and then burned.

THE local Convention and Visitors Bureau may well be hoping that even the prospective travellers to this city who have had their fears quieted about the crisis in Washington Heights haven't seen "Batman Returns." Most of the out-of-town moviegoers who helped swell box-office revenues to over a hundred million dollars in the two weeks after the June 19th opening would probably agree that part of the film's message is that Gotham City is not a town they would care to seek temporary houseroom in. (Gotham, of course, has been used as an alternative name for New York since early in the last century, when a trio of local writers, including Washington Irving, brought out a series of comic essays satirizing life in this city.) A seat in a movie theatre may be as close as some out-of-towners feel they want to come to Batmanland, with its menacing, dark, often decrepit buildings and its overwrought residents—grotesque, violent, or just conveying the impression that they have fallen on hard times, with harder times ahead. The mayor of Gotham City, a mild-mannered, undynamic sort, seems to be a political goner when his opponent in a municipal election is the deformed Penguin, who recently emerged from the sewers beneath the city, into which his parents had thrown him as a baby, and, scarred by the sewers' toxic waste, has vowed vengeance against society. (The area under the city is getting crowded. It is in these same sewers, as any child-ridden household knows, that the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—allegedly a child's pet turtles dropped through a grating by accident and turned into mutants by radioactive waste—have their headquarters. Since both the Turtles and "Batman Returns" are immensely profitable enterprises, a ruling that would allow the city to charge rent for the imaginative use of its sewer areas could be helpful in resolving local budget deficits.)

The impression that events in "Batman Returns" might be related to the present New York scene was reinforced in some minds because the voice of Christopher Walken, as he plays Max Shreck, the ruthless, power-hungry businessman (specializing in the dumping of toxic waste) who is the Penguin's chief ally and political sponsor, sounds to many moviegoers like that of a prominent local citizen, Donald Trump. Walken has reported hearing this comment a lot, and has explained that "Gotham City is really New York," and that both he and Trump were brought up in Queens. (A Bronx accent was detected by some reviewers in the voice of Danny DeVito, who plays the Penguin.) At the end of the movie, the Penguin is vanquished, and the dark city brightens for a time (at least until

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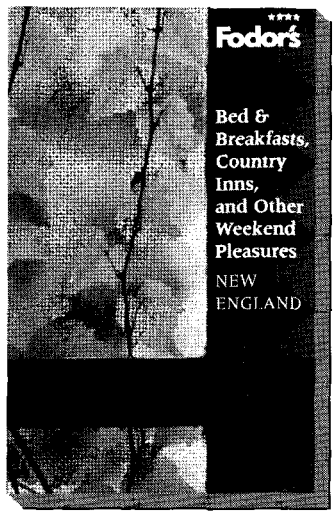

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the next "Batman" sequel) as the lights shine on the Christmas tree at the movie's version of Rockefeller Center, and Batman signals a happy—and gender-positive—ending, with the words "Merry Christmas and good will toward men . . . and women."

Since the racial or ethnic implications of any project proposed in this city often come up before questions like how much it will cost and whether it is morally right or wrong, no one should have been greatly surprised that early this month a *Times* Op-Ed piece, "Batman and the Jewish Question," by two Columbia seniors, Rebecca Roiphe and Daniel Cooper, identified the film as an allegory about good versus evil, in which Jews represent evil and Gentiles good. According to the article, DeVito, though he is not Jewish, plays the vicious Penguin as a Jew, and Max Shreck is given "this Jewish-sounding name." (Tim Burton, the movie's director, has explained that the name is an inside joke, being an allusion to the actor who played the first film vampire, in the 1922 classic "Nosferatu.") The music for "Batman Returns," the article notes, resembles that of Richard Wagner, an anti-Semite who was a Nazi favorite, and the Penguin, sailing through the sewers in a giant rubber duck, is meant to remind audiences not of Ernie's rubber duckie on the nondenominational "Sesame Street" but of the "Schwan der Schelde," from "Lohengrin." The film's final scene, with its Christmas tree and Christmas message, is offered, in the view of the Columbia students, as the triumph of the Christian over the Jewish ethic: Christian faith conquers all. This analysis of "Batman Returns" may swell the movie's grosses even more as readers go back to see if they agree with it.

Out-of-Towners who come out of the film-house dark and decide to brave the city's well-advertised perils are likely to conclude that New York this month (Christmas in July, perhaps) is an improvement over Gotham City—not in its sewers, of course, but in midtown Manhattan, where the Convention delegates are likely to spend their time. A hundred and fifty miles of streets there have been paved with a mixture of asphalt and recycled glass that gleams underfoot. Light posts have been painted and flowers planted, and many of the homeless in that area have been persuaded to move elsewhere, at least for a few days, lest they offend the delegates' sensibilities. Three thousand policemen have been assigned as security for the Convention—another budget-buster. Each of them was chosen, the Police Department has explained, because of his or her "philosophy of tolerance"—although there's no guarantee that they would take kindly to being hanged in effigy. Most of them have been shown a video, produced by the department, that emphasizes the constitutional right to assemble and protest. The advertising slogan for the Convention—"NYC . . . *It's All Yours*"—is certainly welcoming. It's possible that the most prominent visitors who will have to be persuaded to take a positive view of the city are the Democrats' Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. It was after an especially ugly primary in this city in 1988, from which he emerged with just ten per cent of the vote, that Tennessee Senator Albert Gore sadly withdrew from the Presidential race. And although Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton's victory in the New York primary this year was what settled the Democratic Presidential contest, he has continued to complain at every opportunity of his treatment by the local tabloid press. The fact that Gore and Clinton, at forty-four and forty-five years old, respectively, are on the young side of the generation gap, in contrast to Ross Perot, aged sixty-two, and George Bush, aged sixty-eight, will often be mentioned in the campaign. And there may be local citizens who will see themselves as being faced in the general election with something like a language barrier—having to choose among an array of candidates who, to their minds, talk funny, the Democrats talking like Arkansas and Tennessee, and Perot and Bush like Texas. (At any rate, the President often makes an effort—dropping his "g"s and all that—to try to live up to his official residence in Houston.) Of course, the truth is that to *their* minds it is the people from the Bronx and Queens who talk funny. Probably the best policy for New Yorkers is to keep reminding their visitors that this should be considered a lucky place. It was in this city that the Democrats last nominated a Presidential candidate—Jimmy Carter, another funny talker—who went on to win in November.

—Andy Logan

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BOOKS

The Hammer and the Nail

RICHARD WRIGHT was thirty-one when "Native Son" was published, in 1940. He was born in a sharecropper's cabin in Mississippi and grew up in extreme poverty: his father abandoned the family when Wright was five, and his mother was incapacitated by a stroke before he was ten. In 1927, he fled to Chicago, and eventually he found a job in the Post Office there, which enabled him (as he later said) to go to bed on a full stomach every night for the first time in his life. He became active in literary circles, and in 1933 he was elected executive secretary of the Chicago branch of the John Reed Club, a writers' organization associated with the Communist Party. In 1935, he finished a short novel called "Cesspool," about a day in the life of a black postal worker. No one would publish it. He had better luck with a collection of short stories, "Uncle Tom's Children," which appeared in 1938. The reviews were admiring, but they did not please Wright. "I found that I had written a book which even bankers' daughters could read and weep over and feel good about," he complained, and he vowed that his next book would be too hard for tears.

"Native Son" was that book, and it is not a novel for sentimentalists. It involves the asphyxiation, decapitation, and cremation of a white woman by a poor young black man from the south side of Chicago. The man, Bigger Thomas, feels so invigorated by what he has done that he tries to extort money from the woman's wealthy parents. When that scheme fails, he murders his black girlfriend, and even after he has finally been captured and sentenced to death he refuses to repent. Nobody in America had ever before told a story like this, and had it published. In three weeks, the book sold two hundred and fifteen thousand copies.

It will give an idea of the world into which "Native Son" made its uncouth appearance to recall that at almost the same moment that Wright's novel was entering the best-seller lists—the spring of 1940—Hattie McDaniel was being given an Academy Award for her performance as Mammy in "Gone with the Wind." McDaniel was the first black person ever voted an Oscar, and she gave Hollywood (as all Oscar winners ideally do) an occasion for self-congratulation. "Only in America, the Land of the Free, could such a thing have happened," the columnist Louella Parsons explained. "The Academy is apparently growing up and so is Hollywood. We are beginning to realize that art has no boundaries and that creed, race, or color must not interfere where credit is due." She did not go on to note that when McDaniel and her escort arrived at the Coconut Grove for the awards ceremony they found that they had been seated at a special table at the rear of the room, near the kitchen.

"The day 'Native Son' appeared, American culture was changed forever," Irving Howe once wrote, and the remark has been quoted many times. What Howe meant was that after "Native Son" it was no longer possible to pretend, as Louella Parsons had pretended, that the history of racial oppression was a legacy from which we could emerge without suffering an enduring penalty. White Americans had attempted to dehumanize black Americans, and everyone carried the scars; it would take more than calling America "the Land of the Free" and really meaning it to make the country whole. If this is what, more than fifty years ago, Wright intended to say in "Native Son," he isn't wrong yet.

"Native Son" also stands at the beginning of a period in which novels (and, more recently, movies) by black Americans have treated the subject of race with a lack of gentility almost unimaginable before 1940. In this respect, too, Wright's novel casts a long shadow. But if we consider "Native Son" primarily in the company of works by other black writers, we'll miss what Wright was up to, and why he is such a remarkable figure.

Wright's intentions have been difficult to grasp, because many of his books were mangled or chopped up by various editors, and their publication was strewn over five decades. "Lawd Today!" (the retitled "Cesspool") was not published until 1963, three years after Wright's death, and then it appeared in a bowdlerized edition. One of the stories in "Uncle Tom's Children" was rejected by its publisher and did not appear in the first edition of the book; it was added to a second edition, published after "Native Son" became a best-seller. "Native Son" itself was partly expurgated, and a significant episode was dropped, at the request of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Half of Wright's autobiography, "Black Boy"

"I married for contrast."

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(published in 1945), was cut, also in order to please the Book-of-the-Month Club, and remained unpublished in book form until 1977, when it appeared under Wright's original title for the entire work, "American Hunger." And the long novel "The Outsider" was heavily edited, and some pages were dropped without Wright's approval, when it was first published, in 1953.

These five books have now been expertly restored to their original condition by Arnold Rampersad, the biographer of Langston Hughes, and published by the Library of America (in two volumes; $35 each). Rampersad has also provided succinct annotations, some helpful notes on the complicated history of Wright's texts, and a useful chronology of Wright's life. Wright produced more work after "The Outsider" than is included here: in the last seven years of his life he wrote two novels, a collection of stories, a play, several works of nonfiction, and some four thousand haiku. But Rampersad's selection has a meaningful shape: it puts the best-known works, "Native Son" and "Black Boy," at the center and provides them with, in effect, their prologue and epilogue. The result gives us the core of Wright's work not as it was once seen but as it was intended.

Putting the expurgated material back in gives all three of the novels a grittier surface; and in the case of "Native Son" it also adds a dimension to the story. In the familiar version of the novel, a puzzling line appears during a scene, late in the book, in which the State's Attorney tries to intimidate Bigger by letting him understand that he has information about other crimes and misdeeds Bigger has committed, including, he says, "that dirty trick you and your friend Jack pulled off in the Regal Theatre." The reference is opaque. Bigger and his friend do go to the Regal Theatre, a movie house, early in the novel, but no dirty trick is described. In the original version, though, after Bigger and his friend enter the theatre they masturbate (the State's Attorney's comment is now revealed to include a pun), and are seen by a female patron and reported to the manager.

The Book-of-the-Month Club, Wright's editor informed him, objected to the scene, which, the editor thought Wright would agree, was "a bit on the raw side." Wright obliged the club's sense of propriety by removing the "dirty trick." But he hadn't intended Bigger's public masturbation to be simply a redundant example of his general sociopathy. In Wright's original version, after Bigger and Jack masturbate they watch a newsreel featuring the woman Bigger will accidentally kill that night, Mary Dalton. She is shown on vacation on a beach in Florida, and Bigger and Jack decide (as the newsreel encourages them to) that she looks as if she might be "a hot kind of girl." Wright cut this episode as well (he had Bigger watch a movie critical of political radicalism instead); and he also eliminated a few lines (apparently too steamy for the Book-of-the-Month Club) from Bigger's later encounter with the flesh-and-blood Mary which made it clear that Bigger is sexually aroused by her.

Restoring this material restores more than a couple of scenes. Bigger's sexuality has always been a puzzle. He hates Mary, and is afraid of her, but she is attractive and is negligent about sexual decorum, and the combination ought to provoke some sort of sexual reaction; yet in the familiar edition it does not. Now we can see that, originally, it was meant to. The restoration of Bigger's sexuality also helps to make sense of his later treatment of his girlfriend, Bessie. He repeats intentionally with Bessie what he has done, for the most part unpremeditatedly, to Mary: he takes her upstairs in an abandoned building, kills her by crushing her skull with a brick, and disposes of her body by throwing it down an airshaft. But before Bigger kills Bessie he rapes her, and if the scene is to carry its full power we have to have felt that when Bigger was with Mary in her bedroom he had rape in his heart.

WRIGHT was a writer of warring impulses. His rage at the injustices of the world he knew made him impatient with the usual logic of literary expression. He was a gifted inventor of morally explosive situations, but once the situations in his stories actually explode he can never seem to let the pieces fall where they will. His novels suffer from an essentially antinovelistic condition: they are hostage to a politics of outcomes. Wright tries to order events to fit his sense of justice—or, more accurately, his sense of the impossibility of justice—and when the moral is not unambiguous enough he inserts a speech. At the same time, Wright loved literature intimately, as you might love a person who has rescued you from misery or danger. Literature, he said, was the first place in which he had found his inner sense of the world reflected and ratified. Everything else, from the laws and mores of Southern apartheid to the religious fanaticism of his own family (he grew up mostly in the house of his maternal grandmother, a devout Seventh-Day Adventist, who believed that storytelling was a sin), he experienced as pure hostility.

After he moved to Chicago, he discovered in Marxism a second corroboration of his convictions, and he joined the Communist Party. But he believed that Marxist politics were compatible with a commitment to literature—and the belief led, in 1942, to his break, and subsequent feud, with the Party. He had an appreciation not only of those writers whose influence on his own work is most obvious—Dostoyevski and Dreiser and, later on, Camus and Sartre—but also of Gertrude Stein, Henry James, T. S. Eliot, Turgenev, and Proust. From the beginning of his literary career, in the John Reed Club, until the end, in self-exile in France, he participated in writers' organizations and congresses, where he spoke as a champion of artistic freedom; and he was a mentor for, among other young writers, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Gwendolyn Brooks.

It's true that Wright's convictions flatten out the "literary" qualities of his fiction, and lead him to sacrifice complexity for force. His novels tend to be prolix and didactic, and his style is often dogged. But force is a literary quality, too—and one that can make other limitations seem irrelevant. Wright's descriptions, for example, are almost all painted in primary colors straight out of the naturalist paintbox; but the flight of Bigger Thomas through the snow in "Native Son"—a black man seeking invisibility in a world of whiteness—is one of the most effective sequences in American fiction.

The apparent indifference to artistry in Wright's work has seemed to some people a thing to be admired, a guarantee of literary honesty. It's the way a black man living in America should write, they feel. This interpretation is

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one of the ways Wright's race has been made the key to understanding him; and it's a position that, in various guises and more subtly argued, has turned up often in the long critical debate over Wright's work—a debate that has engaged, over the years, Baldwin, Ellison, Howe, and Eldridge Cleaver.

It is not a position that Wright would have accepted. His models were the great modern writers (nearly all of them white), and he wanted to serve art in the same spirit they had. He was frank about the models he relied on in making "Native Son": "Association with white writers was the life preserver of my hope to depict Negro life in fiction," he wrote in the essay "How Bigger Was Born," "for my race possessed no fictional works dealing with such problems, had no background in such sharp and critical testing of experience, no novels that went with a deep and fearless will down to the dark roots of life." He made it clear that his greatest satisfaction in writing "Native Son" came not from entering a protest against racism and injustice but from proving to himself (he didn't care, he said, what others thought) that he was indeed a maker of literature in the tradition of Poe, Hawthorne, and James. In "the oppression of the Negro," he said, he had found a subject worthy of those writers' genius: "If Poe were alive, he would not have to invent horror; horror would invent him."

What Wright took to be his good fortune was also his dilemma. Poe was, in a sense, the luckier writer. The moral outlines of Wright's principal subject matter were so vivid when he wrote his books that efforts to complicate them would have seemed irresponsible and efforts to heighten them melodramatic. Some of the stories about black victims of Southern racism in "Uncle Tom's Children" have memorable touches of atmosphere and drama, and some are morality plays, but in all of them the action is determined entirely by the unmitigated viciousness of the white characters. When the subject is violent confrontation in a racially divided community—as it is in those stories and in "Native Son"—a "literary" imagination can seem superfluous. In the last section of "Native Son," for example, Wright has Bigger read a long article about his case in a Chicago newspaper, in which he finds himself described in these terms:

> Though the Negro killer's body does not seem compactly built, he gives the impression of possessing abnormal physical strength. He is about five feet, nine inches tall and his skin is exceedingly black. His lower jaw protrudes obnoxiously, reminding one of a jungle beast.
>
> His arms are long, hanging in a dangling fashion to his knees. . . . His shoulders are huge and muscular, and he keeps them hunched, as if about to spring upon you at any moment. He looks at the world with a strange, sullen, fixed-from-under stare, as though defying all efforts of compassion.
>
> All in all, he seems a beast utterly untouched by the softening influences of modern civilization. In speech and manner he lacks the charm of the average, harmless, genial, grinning southern darky so beloved by the American people.

The passage may strike readers today as a case of moral overloading—a caricature of attitudes whose virulence we already acknowledge. In fact, as a student of Wright's work, Keneth Kinnamon, points out in the introduction to a recent collection of "New Essays on Native Son," Wright was using the language of articles in the Chicago *Tribune* about Robert Nixon, a black man who was executed in

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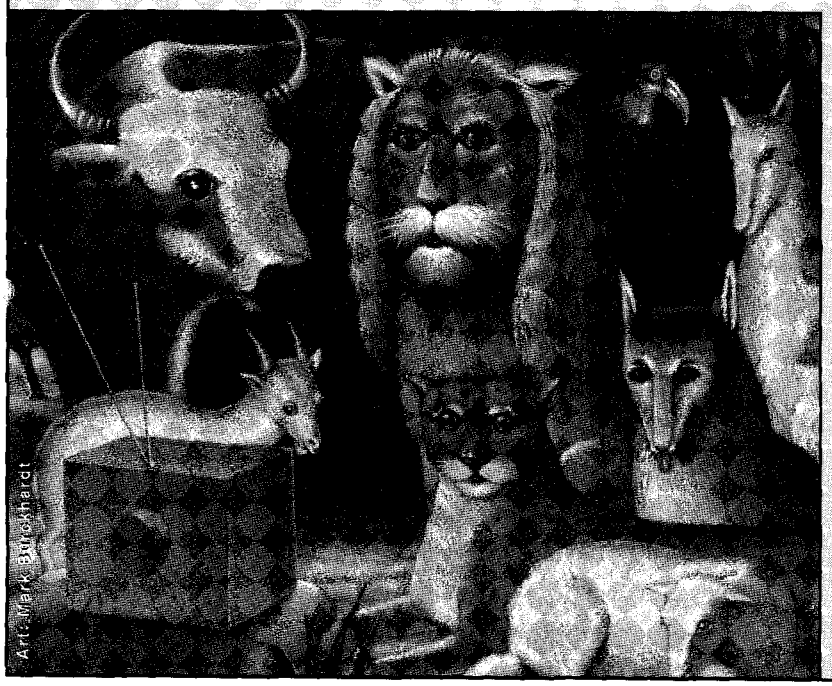

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*Richard Zoglin, *Time*

A Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club

RANDOM HOUSE

Much of the contents of this book originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

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1939 for the murder of a white woman.

For the Wright who wanted to expose an evil that other writers had ignored, the starkness of his material made his job simpler; for Wright the novelist, the same starkness made it harder. In "A Passage to India," E. M. Forster took a situation very like the one Wright used in "Native Son"—impermissible sexual contact between a white woman and a man of color—and built around it a textured, essentially tragic novel about the limits of human goodness. Forster's sensibility was very different from Wright's, of course, but he could work his material in the way he did in part because his "racists" were people who imagined themselves to be enlightened, and this allowed him to tell his story in a highly developed ironic voice. The kind of racism that figures in most of "Native Son," though, is not tragic, and it is not an occasion for irony. It is simply criminal.

Wright seems to have recognized this difficulty partway through "Native Son," and to have responded by giving his work a sociological turn. In "Lawd Today!" (about a black man who is not only a victim of bigotry but a bigot himself), in "Uncle Tom's Children," and in the first two parts of "Native Son" he had tried to describe the conditions of life in a racist society; in the last part of "Native Son" he undertook to explain them. He therefore introduced into his novel a character who has never, I think, won a single admirer: Mr. Max, the Communist lawyer who volunteers to represent Bigger at his trial. Max's bombastic and seemingly interminable speech before the court (twenty-three pages in the new edition), in which he proposes a theory of modern life meant to explain Bigger's conduct, is almost universally regarded as a mistake.

The speech is surely a mistake, but the error is not merely a formal one—putting a long sociological or philosophical disquisition into the mouth of a character. Ivan Karamazov goes on at considerable length about the Grand Inquisitor, after all, and few people object. The problem with Max's oration isn't that it's sociology; it's that it's boring. And it's boring because Wright didn't really believe it himself.

Max's thesis is that twentieth-century industrialism has created a "mass man," a creature who is bombarded with images of consumerist bliss by movies and advertisements but has been given no means for genuine fulfillment. The consequence is an inner condition of fear and rage which everyone shares, and for which black men like Bigger are made the scapegoats. This fits in neatly enough with much of the story for it to sound like Wright's last word. But it's not: Max's courtroom performance is followed by one final scene, in which Bigger talks with Max in his jail cell. They carry on a rather broken conversation, at the end of which Bigger cries out:

> "I didn't want to kill! . . . But what I killed for, I *am!* It must've been pretty deep in me to make me kill! I must have felt it awful hard to murder. . . ."
>
> Max lifted his hand to touch Bigger, but did not.
>
> "No; no; no. . . . Bigger, not that. . . ." Max pleaded despairingly.
>
> "What I killed for must've been good!" Bigger's voice was full of frenzied anguish. "It must have been good! When a man kills, it's for something. . . . I didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for 'em. . . . It's the truth, Mr. Max. I can say it now, 'cause I'm going to die. I know what I'm saying real good and I know how it sounds. But I'm all right. I feel all right when I look at it that way. . . ."
>
> Max's eyes were full of terror. Several times his body moved nervously, as though he were about to go to Bigger; but he stood still.
>
> "I'm all right, Mr. Max. Just go and tell Ma I was all right and not to worry none, see? Tell her I was all right and wasn't crying none. . . ."
>
> Max's eyes were wet. Slowly, he extended his hand. Bigger shook it.
>
> "Good-bye, Bigger," he said quietly.
>
> "Good-bye, Mr. Max."

That Bigger should have the book's last word and that what he has to say should terrify, and apparently baffle, Max has seemed to some critics to be Wright's way of saying that not even the most sympathetic white person can hope to have a true understanding of a black person's experience—that the articulation of black experience requires a black voice. "Max's inability to respond and the fact that Bigger's words are left to stand alone without the mediation of authorial commentary serve as the signs that in this novel dedicated to the dramatization of a black man's consciousness the subject has finally found his own unqualified incontrovertible voice" is how one of those critics, John M. Reilly, puts it in his contribution to "New Essays on Native Son." This academic excitement over a black character's saying something "unmediated" ought to be followed by a little attention to what it is that the character is actually saying. For what Bigger says (and Max understands him perfectly well) has nothing to do with negritude. It is that he has discovered murder to be a form of self-realization—that it has been revealed to him that all the brave ideals of civilized life, including those of Communist ideology, are sentimental delusions, and the fundamental expression of the instinct of being is killing. Two years before Wright formally broke with the Communist Party, in other words, he had already turned in Marx for Nietzsche.

NOW that Wright's books can be read in the sequence in which they were written, we can see more clearly the dominance that this belief came to hold in Wright's thinking. It didn't replace his interest in the subject of race; it subsumed it. Wright intended "Black Boy," for example, to have two parts—the first about his life in the South, and the second about his experiences with the Communist Party. But the Book-of-the-Month Club refused to publish the second part. Wright was convinced that the Communists were behind the refusal (and it is hard to find another reason for it), but he agreed to the cut, and "Black Boy" became an indictment of Southern racism (and a best-seller). Wright managed to publish segments of the suppressed half of the book in various places during his lifetime—the most widely read excerpt is probably the one that appeared in Richard Crossman's postwar anthology "The God That Failed." When the autobiography is read as it was intended to be read, though, it is no longer a book about Jim Crow. It is a book about oppression in general, seen through three examples: the racism of Southern whites, the religious intolerance of Southern blacks, and the totalitarianism of the Communist Party.

The idea that there are no "better" forms of human community but only different kinds of domination—that, in the metaphor of "Native Son"'s famous opening scene, Bigger must kill the rat that has invaded his apartment not because Biggers are better than rats but because if he does not the rat will kill Bigger—is what gives "The Outsider," the novel Wright published in 1953, its distinctly obsessional quality. The outsider is a black man, Cross Damon, who is presented with a chance

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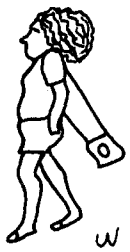
to escape from an increasingly grim set of personal troubles when the subway train he is riding in crashes and one of the bodies is identified mistakenly as his. Cross has been, we learn, an avid reader of the existentialist philosophers, and he decides to assume a new identity and to see what it would be like to live in a world without moral meaning—to live "beyond good and evil." He quickly discovers that perfect moral freedom means the freedom to kill anyone whose existence he finds an inconvenience, and he murders four people and causes the suicide of a fifth before he is himself assassinated. (Wright was always drawn to composing lurid descriptions of physical violence. There are beatings and killings in nearly all his stories; and his first published work, written when he was a schoolboy, and now lost, was a short story called "The Voodoo of Hell's Half-Acre.")



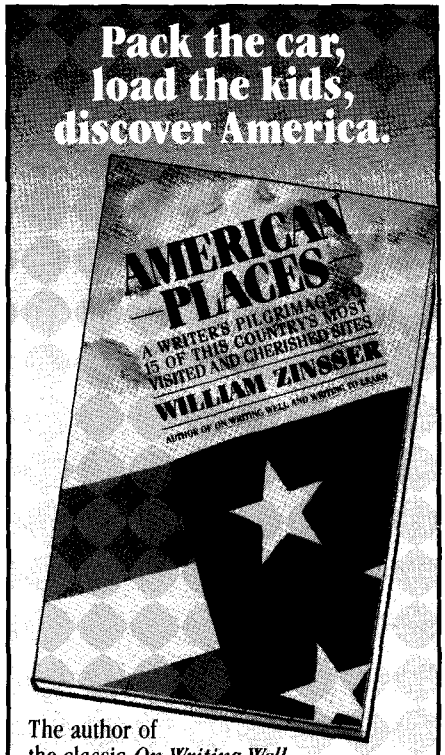
The influence of Camus's "L'Étranger" is easy to see, but Wright's book is even more explicitly a *roman à thèse*. Two of Cross's victims are Communists; a third is a Fascist. Cross kills them, it is explained, because he recognizes in Communists and Fascists the same capacity for murder and contempt for morality he has discovered in himself. The point (which Wright finds a number of occasions for Cross to spell out) is that Communism and Fascism are particularly naked and cynical examples of the will to power. They accommodate two elemental desires: the desire of the strong to be masters, and the desire of the weak to be slaves. Once, as Cross sees it, myths, religions, and the hard shell of social custom prevented people from acting on those desires directly; in the twentieth century, though, all restraining cultural influences have been stripped away, and in their absence totalitarian systems have emerged. Communism and Fascism are, at bottom, identical expressions of the modern condition.

And is racism as well? Race is only a minor theme in "The Outsider," but there is no evidence in the book that Wright regards racism as a peculiar case, and "The Outsider" reads, without strain, as an extension of the idea he was developing at the end of "Native Son"—that racial oppression is just another example of the pleasure the hammer takes in hitting the nail.

It's not completely clear how we're meant to understand this analysis. Is the point supposed to be that twentieth-century society is unique? Or only that it is uniquely barefaced? If it's the latter—if the idea is that *all* societies are enactments of the impulses to dominate and to submit but some have disguised their brutality more effectively than others—we have reached a dead end: every effort to conceive of a better way of life simply reduces to some new hammer bashing away at some new nail. But if it's the former—if Wright's idea is that modern industrial society, with its contempt for life's traditional consolations, is a terrible mistake—then racism is really an example that contradicts his thesis. For the South in which slavery flourished was not an industrial economy; it was an agricultural one, with a social system about two steps up the ladder from feudalism. That civilization was destroyed in the Civil War, but the racism survived, in the form that Wright himself described so unsparingly in the first part of "Black Boy" and in the essay "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow": as part of a deeply ingrained pattern of custom and belief. To the extent that the forces of modernity are bent on wiping out tradition and superstition, institutionalized racism is (like Fascism) not their product, as Wright seems to be insisting, but a resistant cultural strain, an anachronism.

The evil of modern society isn't that it creates racism but that it creates conditions in which people who don't suffer from injustice seem incapable of caring very much about people who do. Wright knew this from his own experience. There is a passage in the restored half of "Black Boy" which is as fine as anything he wrote about race in America, but which also has an exactness and a poignancy often missing from his fiction. Shortly after he arrived in Chicago, Wright went to work as a dishwasher in a café:

> One summer morning a white girl came late to work and rushed into the pantry where I was busy. She went into the women's room and changed her clothes; I heard the door open and a second later I was surprised to hear her voice:
>
> "Richard, quick! Tie my apron!"
>
> She was standing with her back to me and the strings of her apron dangled loose. There was a moment of indecision on my part, then I took the two loose strings and carried them around her body and brought them again to her back and tied them in a clumsy knot.
>
> "Thanks a million," she said grasping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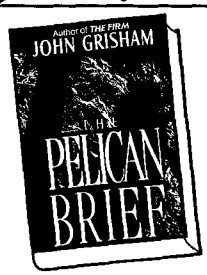

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my hand for a split second, and was gone.

I continued my work, filled with all the possible meanings that that tiny, simple, human event could have meant to any Negro in the South where I had spent most of my hungry days.

I did not feel any admiration for the girls [who worked in the café], nor any hate. My attitude was one of abiding and friendly wonder. For the most part I was silent with them, though I knew that I had a firmer grasp of life than most of them. As I worked I listened to their talk and perceived its puzzled, wandering, superficial fumbling with the problems and facts of life. There were many things they wondered about that I could have explained to them, but I never dared. . . .

(I know that not race alone, not color alone, but the daily values that give meaning to life stood between me and those white girls with whom I worked. Their constant outward-looking, their mania for radios, cars, and a thousand other trinkets made them dream and fix their eyes upon the trash of life, made it impossible for them to learn a language which could have taught them to speak of what was in their or others' hearts. The words of their souls were the syllables of popular songs. . . .)

This feels much closer to the truth than the simplified Nietzscheism of "The Outsider." But, having rejected first the religious culture in which he was brought up, then the American political culture that permitted his oppression, then Communism, and, finally (as Cross's death symbolizes), the existential Marxism he encountered in postwar France, Wright seems, by 1953, to have found himself in a place beyond solutions. He was not driven there by an idiosyncratic logic, though; he was just following the path he had first chosen. Wright's experience, that of a Southern black man who became one of the best-known writers of his time, was unusual; his intellectual journey was not. The attraction to Communism in the nineteen-thirties, the bitter split with the Party in the nineteen-forties, the malaise resulting from "the failure of ideology" and from the emergence, after the war, of American triumphalism—it's a familiar narrative. Wright's role as a writer was to take one of the literary forms most closely associated with that narrative, the naturalist novel, and to add race to its list of subject matter. What Upton Sinclair did for industrialism in "The Jungle," what John Dos Passos did for materialism in "U.S.A.," what Sinclair Lewis did for conformism in "Main Street" and "Babbitt" Wright did for racism in "Native Son": he made it part of the naturalist novel's criticism of life under capitalism. And his strengths and weaknesses as a writer are, by and large, the strengths and weaknesses of the tradition in which he worked. He changed the way Americans thought about race, but he did not invent a new form to do it.

This helps to explain the Nietzschean element in "Native Son" and the nihilism of "The Outsider": they are the characteristic symptoms of the exhaustion of the naturalist style. The young Norman Mailer, for example, used Dos Passos and James T. Farrell as his literary models in writing "The Naked and the Dead," but added a dash of Nietzsche to the mixture, and then produced, in the early nineteen-fifties—like Wright, and with similar results—a cloudy parable of ideological dead-endism, "Barbary Shore."

Wright's most famous protégés, James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison, both eventually dissociated their work (Ellison more delicately than Baldwin) from his. They felt that Wright's books lacked a feeling for the richness of the culture of black Americans—that they were written as though black Americans were a people without resources. Someone reading "Native Son," Baldwin complained, would think that "in Negro life there exists no tradition, no field of manners, no possibility of ritual or intercourse" by which black Americans could sustain themselves in a hostile world. But that is what Wright did think. He believed that racism in America had succeeded in stripping black Americans of a genuine culture. There were, in his view, only two ways in which black Americans could respond humanly to their condition: one was to adopt a theology of acceptance sustained by religious faith—a solution Wright had resisted violently as a boy—and the other was to become Biggers (or Crosses), and live outside the law until they were trapped and crushed. Otherwise, there was only the "cesspool" of daily life described in "Lawd Today!"—an endless cycle of demeaning drudgery and cheap thrills.

It's not hard to see why writers like Ellison and Baldwin resisted this vision of black experience, but it is a vision true to Wright's own particular history of deprivation. Ellison, by contrast, grew up in Oklahoma, a state that has no history of slavery, and he attended Tuskegee Institute, where he was introduced to, among other works, T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," a poem whose influence on his novel "Invisible Man" is palpable—as is the influence of jazz and of the Southern black vernacular. Ellison had a different culture, in other words, because he had a different experience.

What's most appealing about the idea that we should give primary importance to a writer's ethnicity, gender, and sexual preference when we're considering his or her work is that it promises to do away with the big, monolithic abstraction "culture"—the notion that culture is something that transcends the differences between people. The danger, though, is that we will end up with a lot of little monolithic abstractions. Culture isn't something that comes with one's race or sex. It comes only through experience; there isn't any other way to acquire it. And in the end everyone's culture is different, because everyone's experience is different.

Some people are at home with the culture they encounter, as Ellison seems to have been. Some people borrow or adopt their culture, as Eliot did when he transformed himself into a British Anglo-Catholic. A few, extraordinary people have to steal it. Wright was living in Memphis when his serious immersion in literature began, but he could not get books from the public library. So he persuaded a sympathetic, though puzzled, white man to lend him his library card, and he forged a note for himself to present to the librarian: "Dear Madam: Will you please let this nigger boy have some books by H. L. Mencken?" He had discovered, on his own, a literary tradition in which no one had invited him to participate—from which, in fact, the world had conspired to exclude him. He saw in that tradition a way to express his own experience, his own sense of things; and, through heroic persistence, he made that experience a part of our culture. —Louis Menand

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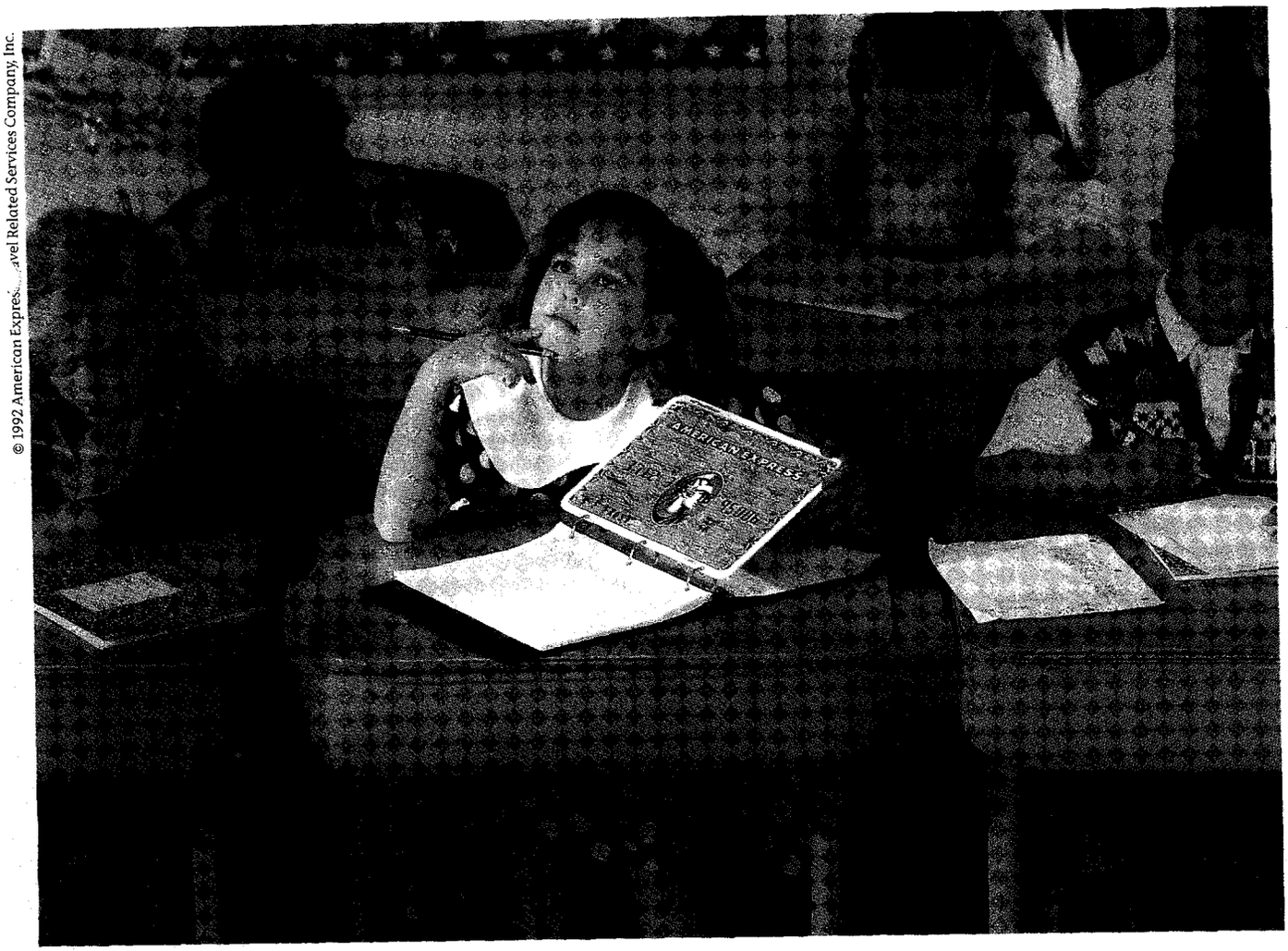

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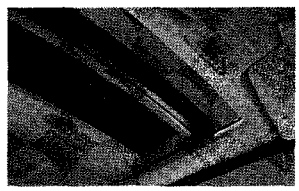
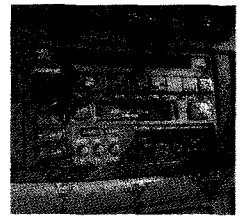
To those loyal to the Camry name, the XLE V6 Sedan with 185 horsepower will no doubt be seen as Toyota's way of saying a quick (yet well mannered) thank you. Luxury appointments abound: 7-way adjustable power driver's seat; power glass moonroof; air conditioning; power windows, door locks and dual outside mirrors are all standard. Elect the optional leather trim interior, premium CD player and Anti-lock Brake System (ABS), and even versus the competition the XLE's bottom line still resides in the temperate zone. Remember, we said no disappointments.





For years in name alone Camry has been as close to a model of perfection as you could hope to own. Now with its all-new sporty elegance, roomier interior, quieter ride, and standard driver-side air bag* complemented by the XLE's extra luxury you truly have an embarrassment of riches.

APPOINTMENTS. NO DISAPPOINTMENTS. THE CAMRY XLE V6.

THE EXTRA LUXURY EDITION CAMRY.

WE JUST COULDN'T LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.

Call 1-800-GO-TOYOTA for a brochure and location of your nearest dealer.
*Always use your seatbelt. Driver-side air bag is a supplemental restraint system. Buckle Up! Do it for those who love you. © 1992 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

"I love what you do for me."

TOYOTA

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